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FOR MISSION LEADERS

MISSION-FOCUS

Contents

The Gospel of Peace, Marlin E. Miller
Irish Theology, Michael Garde
A Time of Loss and A Time of Repentance, book review by David A. Shank

THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Marlin E. Miller

Many contemporary evangelical Christians refer to "the gospel" as if the word had a narrowly circumscribed content. "Preaching the gospel" presumably means proclaiming the message of forgiveness from past sin and guilt through the atoning work of Christ on the cross, inviting sinners to repent and accept God's plan of salvation, and extending the promise of eternal life to those who accept Christ as personal savior. Within the broader Protestant context of evangelical Christianity, "the gospel" also carries the connotation of pure grace, devoid of any ethical demands which might be construed as prerequisites for salvation or as conditions for remaining in a state of peace. Discipleship as the shape of Christian obedience is seen at best as secondary, as a fruit of faith's response to the gospel. It is however not understood as integral to the gospel message as such. Major dogmatic definitions have thus attached to the biblical term "gospel" a particular content which provides a capsule statement of the message to be preached. This content supposedly also serves as a critical safeguard against liberal deviations, for example, against tendencies to seek man's salvation by education, material welfare, or social change rather than by preaching "the gospel."

The New Testament however employs a variety of terms to describe the comprehensiveness of the Good News. Jesus Himself proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom. The Apostle Paul speaks about the gospel of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the glory of Christ, the gospel of salvation, and simply the gospel. Both Peter (Acts 10) and Paul (Ephesians 2, 6) refer to the "gospel of peace." This variety of New Testament terms certainly may not be construed to mean that there are several "gospels" which differ markedly in form and substance. The gospel of God is none other than the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of salvation is the same as the gospel of peace. Even on the most superficial level, this multiplicity of descriptions should caution against too readily limiting our understanding of the gospel to one facet of the New Testament message or against reducing all other dimensions of the Good News to one particular aspect. Such reductionist interpretations almost inevitably end up with a truncated gospel, an amputated Christ, and a crippled church. We should rather seek to understand the particular point of reference of each description and its roots and place within the global vision of the Good News.

Within the limits of this essay, we will focus on the description of the Good News as "the gospel of peace." This focus is prompted not by an attempt to reduce the Good News to a gospel of peace, but by specific shortcomings in broad streams of Protestant and evangelical thought and practice. Sometimes the gospel of peace has simply been omitted from the message as preached. Perhaps more often, "peace" has been reduced to the inner calm of an assuaged conscience, interpreted as "peace with God." Perhaps even more often "peace" has been separated from the gospel and assigned to Christian social ethics. As such it may arise when the topic is discipleship or Christian action in the society at large,

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but peace is not seen as the immediate focus of the gospel. This theological axiom has also been reinforced in the minds of many Mennonite missionaries as well as congregational members by the institutionalized division of labor between denominational mission boards and the Peace Section of the Mennonite Central Committee. In all of these ways, sometimes more explicitly, other times more implicitly, reconciliation of former enemies and the establishment of peace where prejudice, conflict, and injustice characterize human relations and social structures are not understood as integral to Christ's saving work on the cross.

In comparison to these omissions and interpretative schemes, we may summarize our thesis as follows: Peace as a present social and structural reality as well as an inner tranquillity and future promise inherently and explicitly belongs to a biblically adequate understanding of salvation through Jesus the Messiah. It therefore also inherently and explicitly belongs to a mission theology and practice which accepts the New Testament description and proclamation of the Good News as normative for Christian mission in our time.

In its major forms, the word "peace" appears over 100 times in the New Testament. The contexts of its usage also demonstrate its significance for the biblical message. God is repeatedly called the God of peace; Jesus is named the Lord of peace; the Holy Spirit is recognized to be the Spirit of peace. After Jerusalem's rejection of the messianic peace offered by Jesus, He gave it instead to His disciples. "Peace" was the characteristic greeting of the early Christians. In using this greeting, they most likely meant to follow Jesus' own practice and to witness to the fulfillment of the messianic peace. When he addressed Cornelius, a Gentile with whom faithful Jews were to have no close association, the Apostle Peter summarized God's message to His people as "the good news of peace through Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36). The Apostle Paul encouraged the Christians in Ephesus to "stand firm" with their "feet fitted with the gospel of peace as a firm footing" (Ephesians 6:15). In the same epistle, he summarized the purpose of Jesus' coming and of His death on the cross as the making of peace between Jew and Gentile.

We do well to remember that Jesus and His disciples stood in the tradition of the Old Testament law and prophets (Matthew 5:12). When they spoke about peace and identified the good news of salvation with the gospel of **peace**, they used the term in the Hebraic sense of **shalom**. John Driver has aptly summarized this understanding of peace in *Community and Commitment,* from which we quote extensively: "Shalom is a broad concept, essential to the Hebrew understanding of relationship between people and God. It covers human welfare, health, and well-being in both spiritual and material aspects. It describes a condition of well-being resulting from sound relationships among people and between people and God. According to the prophets, true peace reigned in Israel when justice (or righteousness) prevailed, when the common welfare was assured, when people were treated with equality and respect, when salvation flourished according to the social order determined by God in the covenant which He had established with His people. In fact, the prophet understood that God's covenant with Israel was a 'covenant of life and peace' (Malachi 2:5).

"On the other hand, when there was greed for unjust gain, when judges could be bought for a price, when there was not equal opportunity for all, when suffering was caused by social and economic oppression, then there was no peace, even though false prophets insisted to the contrary (Jeremiah 6:13-14).

"For the Hebrews, peace was not merely the absence of armed conflict. Rather shalom was assured by the prevalence of conditions which contribute to human well-being in all its dimensions. Not mere tranquillity of spirit or serenity of mind, peace had to do with harmonious relationships between God and His people. It had to do with social relationships characterized by His people. It had to do with social relationships characterized by justice. Peace resulted when people lived together according to God's intention. Peace, justice, and salvation are synonymous terms for general well-being created by right social relationships."[1]

To be sure, the concept of peace in the New Testament differs in significant ways from this composite image of shalom in the Old Testament. In this respect, the New Testament fulfills and transforms the expectations of the Old. But this fulfillment and transformation does not amount to replacing the Hebraic vision of peace with Greek or Roman views of peace, even though these may be more familiar to those of us shaped by western culture and accustomed to thinking with its categories. In contrast to a predominantly Greek view, the New Testament does not focus on peace as inner calm and tranquillity at the expense of peace as reconciliation in social relations and structures. Nor does the New Testament consider peace to be the balance of self-interest between power groups regulated by an extensive legal system and maintained by military might. Such a view is part of the Roman legacy to western culture. All too often Christianity has adopted this notion of peace when it has identified itself with a particular group or nation. The differences between the Old and New Testaments have to do rather with the way in which Jesus fulfilled the messianic expectations of the Old and the way in which shalom took shape in the church as the messianic community. These differences transform but do not eliminate the structural and social dimensions of peace understood in the Hebraic sense of **shalom**.

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The messianic peace inaugurated by Jesus and characterizing the Christian Community springs from Christ's sacrifice on the cross. As a mature missionary-theologian, the Apostle Paul summarizes in Ephesians 2 and 3 the "mystery" about the present age made known to him by revelation. According to the revelation of this mystery—something which had previously remained hidden from the sight and knowledge of humanity—God's intent at the present time is that His "manifold wisdom" be made known "to the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms" through the church. As made clear in the Apostle's summary, he does not mean simply that the church should transmit a particular message which in some curious way will be communicated to angelic powers. God would hardly have needed such a devious route of communication with angelic hosts. The crucial issue is rather that the church now exists as the messianic community made up of both Jew and Gentile. Those who had previously been divided by an insurmountable hostility of religious, social, cultural, and political dimensions now were reconciled and participated on an equal basis in the messianic **shalom**. The community made up of former enemies is itself the message—visible as well as verbal—of God's intent in creation, as in the cross of Christ. In the Ephesians summary, reconciliation and peace between former enemies even provide the context in which both may live in "peace with God." The peace between Jew and Gentile is the realm in which the reality of peace with God may be experienced—rather than a possible secondary and derivative consequence of a purely transcendent peace with God. The messianic peace encompasses both the reconciliation of enemies on the social level as well as the common access to the presence of God.

Contrary to several strands in the Old Testament expectations as well as among the Jewish people of the first century, Jesus as the Messiah made peace by suffering and death, rather than by righteous vengeance and the domination of the enemies of God's people: "But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier . . . His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Ephesians 2:13ff, NIV). The peace established by Jesus as the Messiah thus retains and even goes beyond the Hebraic understanding of shalom as including the social relations among God's people and between the people and God. It includes the realization of reconciliation and community unattainable by human efforts and therefore relegated to a utopian future age. What had been considered utopian had now through the cross become present reality.

Traditional doctrines of the atonement have usually focused on the language of sacrifice and have understood the work of Christ for the salvation of humankind above all in relation to his death on the cross. Whether of Anselmic or Abelardian leanings, whether explaining Christ's death on the cross as a ransom paid to the devil or as a demonstration of His power over the evil one, and whatever else their strengths or weaknesses, the classic understandings of the atonement have overlooked or neglected any direct relation between the crucifixion and the social reality of the messianic peace. They have focused rather on the enmity between the sinful or guilty soul and God, thus abstracting from both the social reality of sin as well as of reconciliation.

The language of Paul's summary however emphasizes that the work of Christ inherently means the making of peace between human enemies as well as providing their common access to God. Peacemaking between enemies thus belongs fundamentally to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—not only to Christian social ethics once the enmity with God has been overcome. This making of peace includes both a destructive and a constructive action.

By his death on the cross, Jesus "has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations" (Ephesians 2:14f, NIV). Peacemaking in the sense of the biblical shalom means first of all negation of whatever causes division and hostility. It begins at the point of offense in the situation of conflict and confronts that offense rather than simply calling for greater toleration or balancing off one offense against another. The offense between Jew and Gentile was founded on "the law with its commandments and regulations." What had originally been given to the Jewish people as a part of God's covenant with His people had become a means of perpetuating and justifying division from and enmity with the Gentiles. The uniqueness of Jewish existence and of its relation to God was defined in such a way that it meant division from and enmity with the Gentiles. This division and hostility continued to shape the mood and actions of many early Christians—even though contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit as recounted in Acts. But as Paul rightly insists, the fulfillment of the messianic peace in the Christian community means the destruction of the occasion for enmity and prejudice. The crucifixion of Jesus as the representative of God's chosen people means that He has taken the initiative to destroy the barrier between His people and their enemies rather than compelling the outsiders to submit to the spiritual and social domination of His people and their enemies rather than compelling the outsiders to submit to the spiritual and social domination of His people, or rather than simply leaving them outside the scope of His peace. In solidarity with Jesus, Jewish Christians were thus freed to die to the presumed necessity of finding their identity in a religious, social, and cultural reality which ratified enmity with all those outside their own ethnic group.

Nothing less than the cross of the Messiah could

overcome a hostility as profound and pervasive as that between Jew and Gentile. In situations of radical enmity, the conflict may be overcome only by the elimination or defeat of the enemy. The elimination of the enemy, whether in personal or social conflict as experienced on the human level, however, rules out any reconciliation between the opposing parties. The defeat of the enemy in such conflict situations only reinforces the resentment on the part of the defeated and relegates him to the status of subjugated or second-class citizen in relation to the victor. And the defeat of the enemy only reinforces, on the part of the victor, his own personal or social identity, now further strengthened by the experience of having conquered the one who threatened that identity. These examples may serve as partial analogies to the way in which only the death of Jesus on the cross could overcome the hostility between Jew and Gentile. "Through the cross" the occasion for this conflict was destroyed without relegating the Gentiles to second-class citizenship in the messianic community. "Through the cross" the hostility was defeated without reinforcing the kind of Jewish existence which necessarily implied enmity with the Gentiles or spiritual or political subjugation to the Jews.

The making of peace and the reconciliation of former enemies has a constructive side. In destroying the barrier of hostility, Jesus' purpose "was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace." This constructive side confirms the Hebraic understanding of shalom which goes beyond mere absence of conflict to a reordering and restructuring of social relations between former enemies and between them and God. In this aspect of making peace the Messiah is the representative of a new humanity. He is the new "image of God" who incarnates a human identity in which reconciliation and peace rather than strife and division become a visible and social reality. Paul's language here is rooted in the creation account, but now oriented around the new creation in the person and corporate existence of the Messiah. Both Jew and Gentile are given a new basis for existence. Rather than perpetuating their uniqueness as experienced and defined over against each other, they are granted a new common existence in Christ. The new humanity created by the Messiah is His own corporate existence, the messianic community in which hostilities are overcome and former enemies live in peace. The messianic peace thus includes a change of attitude, but also an equally fundamental restructuring of social realities in the messianic community. National, racial, class, and cultural division and enmity are replaced by a peace which overcomes such divisions and reflects the unity of humankind in Jesus Christ.

The creation of a new corporate existence in which hostility and conflict give way to a new social and religious identity does not however amount to a kind of cosmopolitan universalism, in which the "Gentiles" gain the upper hand. The new community in which the messianic peace takes on social reality is not the realization of a humanistic universalism, but the participation of former enemies in the particular corporate existence of the Messiah. The Apostle Paul can therefore speak of Gentiles, Jews, and "the church of God" (I Corinthians 10). Nor does the fulfillment of the messianic shalom provide a rationale for the elaboration and imposition of a "Christian culture" upon all. The peace of the messianic community is a dynamic rather than a static reality which begins ever anew at the points of offense and hostility between conflicting peoples with the message of reconciliation between themselves and God. As such, the messianic community by its corporate and social existence points toward the final peace and reconciliation of all creatures, which God will establish in His name (Colossians 1).

In addition to the continuity with the Hebraic vision of peace and the Pauline summary of Christ's work on the cross as reconciliation between former enemies, the broader testimony of the New Testament speaks for the structural and social dimensions of the messianic peace. In the messianic community, peace and reconciliation include the creation of new relations between men and women, relations which had been marked by alienation and structures of domination since the fall as described in Genesis. Shalom means a new social and structural relation of mutual service between men and women rather than hostility or domination based on sexual difference. The work of Christ similarly transformed the structure of relations between slaves and masters in the messianic community. Even though the legal and economic structures which perpetuated the "institution" of slavery continued in the broader society, the social reality of these relations began to take on the shape of shalom in the messianic community (Philemon, I Corinthians, Ephesians).

The social dimensions of the messianic peace also extend to the economic area, where wealth becomes another form of power which engenders hostility, oppression, and conflict. The Apostle Paul, who proclaimed the gospel of peace between Jew and Gentile also helped organize the redistribution of material resources between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Not only was this redistribution to respond to the particular material needs under which Jewish Christians suffered, but it was to be carried out according to the "rule of equality" (II Corinthians 8). Far from being limited to a sugjective attitude about the charitable sharing of excess wealth, the collection organized by Paul was a means of making the final equality between former enemies part of the messianic peace. Even though the economic inequalities and divisions of the broader society continued to engender hostility and conflict, the church began to live out this dimension of reconciliation and peace. In making material sharing according to the "rule of equality" part of the gospel of peace, the Apostle Paul continued the tradition

of the early Jerusalem Christians who had "all things in common."

The gospel of peace thus integrally belongs to the Good News about Jesus Christ. The message of peace means that through no merit of our own, we are in Christ reconciled to our enemies and called to participate in the social realities of a new community where old structures of personal, social, and economic hostility are replaced by those of reconciliation. In this sense the gospel of peace is a social gospel. It differs from other social gospels, however, which would attempt to establish peace and overcome conflict by domination and power rather than by inviting men and women to participation in the messianic community. The gospel of peace is also the proclamation of a present reality which has begun to take shape in a world characterized by strife, injustice, and power struggles—not simply a utopian vision of a desirable future. Finally the gospel of peace is both a message and a corporate existence. The credibility of the message will therefore depend in large measure upon the community which proclaims it.

Understood as part of the gospel of peace, several New Testament passages usually cited as support for an almost exclusively individual and subjective understanding of reconciliation and peace with God, in fact express a more comprehensive perspective. For example, most translations of II Corinthians 5 encourage an understanding of God's reconciling work in Christ limited to an inner and personal transformation. Instead of the familiar "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (or an equivalent rendering), a more accurate translation of verse 17 would read "therefore, if anyone is in Christ, (there is a) new creation—the old has gone, behold the new has come." Through reconciliation in Christ there is thus a whole new perspective, a whole new way of looking at the world. Rather than others being judged from the worldly perspective of status, nationality, culture, class, gender, or race, they are now seen as befits their common participation "in Christ." Reconciliation thus means both peace with God as well as with those previously considered enemies. Another example is the familiar opening verse of Romans 5: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." Even though the immediate context of Romans 5:1 does not explicitly refer to the social dimensions of shalom, it does not exclude them either, particularly in view of the Hebraic understanding of shalom which includes both spiritual and social reconciliation. Moreover the broader setting of Romans 5 has to do with the theological foundations of the gospel addressed to both Jew and Gentile. Just as the shalom of the messianic community may not be reduced to a purely social reality, so this social dimension may not be excluded from the peace with God incarnate in Jesus Christ.

A renewed vision of the gospel of peace as an integral part of the Good News of Jesus Christ would have far-reaching consequences for missionary thought and practice. It would mean a theological reorientation with respect to central, traditional, doctrinal formulations which have not been foundationally shaped by the social dimensions of the Good News. It would mean an understanding of the Apostle Paul as a peacemaker, continuing the teaching of Jesus on peace as well as His reconciling way of the cross in the cities of the Roman Empire. It would mean an extension of the missionary proclamation in our time to include the messianic peace addressed to situations of enmity and injustice. It would mean giving priority to theological and missionary efforts which focus on points of conflict and reconciliation rather than reinforcing or totally undergirding given social and economic conflicts and enmity. It would mean the renewal of the church as a messianic community whose basis for existence derives not from national, ethnic, or cultural givens, but from an ever new corporate identity in Christ. To all of this and more we are called and freed by the "good news of peace through Jesus Christ."

Footnote

[1]John Driver, *Community and Commitment* (Scottdale, Pa., and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1976), p. 71.

IRISH THEOLOGY

Michael Garde

Theology is concerned with the study of the Word of God, i.e., sacred Scripture. This, one would think, would be obvious, but experience teaches that the opposite is often the case. The static nature of Protestant and Catholic dogmas hardly touched since the Reformation indicates that the Bible has been enslaved by the church.

Modern trends

Since the Enlightenment we have seen the emergence of critical methods of study which have made the human dimension of the Bible more real. The idea of the Bible coming down from heaven on a rope has been shattered once and for all. The Enlightenment tried to shift the meaning of theology from a study of the Word of God in the words of men, to a study of the experience of God. The father of this approach was Schleiermacher. Accordingly John's gospel is not so much God's word through John, as John's experience of God's word.

On the other hand, some have reacted against this approach as if theology were a given and what God said through Paul or Peter did not arise out of a particular culture. They view the Bible as a linear work of proof texts, flowing from eternity to eternity and merely intersecting our time. The text is what is important, without regard to its context in the development of theology. This approach reacts strongly against the view we represented above which argues that theology is basically our reading our own views into the text. If we were Irishmen, for example, the only theology we could produce would be an Irish theology. If we were to look down the well of history for Jesus, we would see our own face reflected. This is the ultimate explanation of the Liberation theology of South America. Classical theology claimed to be preaching the word of God, but in fact it was upholding the status quo and its own class interests.

To shake ourselves free from such a system, we do not primarily discover what God is saying to us through Scripture, but through analysis—usually Marxist—of our situation. After this analysis we use various resources including Scripture to develop a theory. It tends to produce a "natural theology," a mirror image of its own time. The advantage of this method is that it takes our concrete existence seriously. Starting from practice and the experience of real people, it follows the model of the incarnation. Like Christ it faces such issues as unemployment and women's rights. Its drawback is that it does not take God's word as a starting point.

Classical theology, on the contrary, is idealist, Platonic and enslaved by abstraction. Unlike the writings of the early church which were written to real people with real questions, classical theology is in a "Babylonian" exile of academics sitting in studies writing for other people sitting in studies. It tends to play down the diversity of Scripture and harmonizes when it is totally unnecessary. It would find it hard to accept the possibility of an Irish theology and would say there is only the Word of God. The God of this theology is Greek, without body or passions, and bears little resemblance to the God of incarnation found in the gospels.

Michael Garde was born in South Africa of Irish-German parents. After completing his secondary education in Ireland, he went to London for training in hotel management. There he became a Christian under Billy Graham's preaching in 1966. While at Irish Baptist College, Belfast, he heard Marlin E. Miller and David A. Shank speak about nonviolence. Mike's initial reaction was negative, but he began to study a number of books, including John H. Yoder's ***The Politics of Jesus.*** *He participates actively in the London Mennonite Fellowship. In 1975 Mike graduated from St. Patricks College. Maynooth, leading Roman Catholic seminary in Ireland. He is currently preparing for ministry in Ireland.*

The Irish Situation

Theology in Ireland has to relate to two very different areas, namely, Ulster and the Republic. Both have drawn their theological language from the outside and are still in a dependent state. The Catholic south has gained national independence from Britain, and the majority Catholic church (96% of the population), which in dark days had been the servant of the people, has now become the establishment. It is satisfied with a Sadducean posture. No longer is it seen to be in charge as in former times, but everywhere the power of its institutions is victorious: schools, bedrooms, and moral law all manifest this power, as does the unprecedented 91% attendance at mass. Its theology is now leaning towards liberal Protestantism, and it never questions the confusion and identification of Irishness with Catholicism. Since Vatican II a strange blend of liberalism and conservatism coexist in the Irish church. Gradually the dogmatic certainties of the Council of Trent and Vatican I are withering away and are being replaced by Anglo-Saxon pragmatism and relativism.

The Protestant churches in the Republic drift on without aim or vision. The historian J. C. Beckett foresees the collapse of Protestantism on this island by the end of the century. The 1916 rebellion did not change the economic dominance of the Protestants; today they are 4% of the population and control approximately 30% of the economic wealth of the nation. Is it any wonder that the gospel of good news for the poor and of radical discipleship has not touched Irish Protestant churches?

Northern Ireland has until recently been a British theological satellite. Ian Paisley's "Free Presbyterian movement" attempts to formulate an alternative theology to the liberalism and formalism of other Protestant churches and has the beginnings of an independent Ulster theology. Paisley correctly analyzes the forces of history and has decided on a policy of theological and political reaction. He takes the Province of Ulster as a given absolute which can be separated from the whole history of Ireland. Ulster is the people of Israel; the Catholic Republic is the land of Baal. Paisley is Elijah, the prophet who cannot surrender. When those of us who live in the south claim that we have total freedom to be Christians and that we would view the incorporation of Ulster into the Republic by agreement as one of the greatest possibilities to demonstrate the power of God to change darkness into light, Paisley denounces us as false prophets who cry peace when there is no peace. His demand for total victory over the I.R.A. and a return to a Protestant-dominated Ulster parliament without any power sharing with the Catholic minority is the social outcome of his political theology. It represents a failure to see the newness of the New Covenant which Jesus introduced and a failure to see the diversity and development from Old to New Covenant, from B.C. to A.D. It is based on the writings of Chalmers, Dabney and in an unrecognizable way on the thinking of the Dutch theologian who became Prime Minister of the

Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper (who incidentally came to power by sharing power with the Catholic party). The way then to preserve Protestantism, Paisley argues, is by the might of the state in alliance with the Protestant para military groups which will fight because Ulster is right.

This extreme Protestant attitude ignores the Irish past and denies the gospel call to give up rights, to deny oneself and follow Christ. The existence of the I.R.A. depends on this Protestant inflexibility. Majority Protestants are 60 percent of the Ulster population. Yet they are a people without an identity in the northeast corner of Ireland. Perhaps they are British; but the British government seems to believe in a united Ireland and advocates power sharing as a basic beginning. Perhaps they are Ulster people, but Ulster goes back to the very origins of Irish history, centuries before the Protestants arrived. Perhaps they are Irish people, but this produces a confrontation with the south over the issue of Irishness. As a southern Irish Christian, let me put in on record that as a minority in a United Ireland, Protestants would be compelled to act out a different role from the one they choose at present. I do not mean to give moral sanction to the activities of the I.R.A., but their very existence would be totally useless if Protestants accepted these new conditions. The Catholic dimension would have to be removed from a new Irish federal constitution, and there would need to be a system of checks and balances to protect the Protestant minority in a single, united Ireland. The southern non-Catholic population, which is currently so apathetic, would receive a massive boost to act in an alternative way. This surrender of Protestant rights would not touch the essentials held by various groups which hang or fall on the basis of the Word of God.

The evangelical church in Ulster has divided private and public morality. Generally, save for a few exceptions, it has accepted the status quo, upheld the injustices of the past, and reduced everything to getting saved or personal ethics. While Rome burns, the churches have fiddled over minutiae. They claim that being born again is a vertical relationship with God, and they have no vision of the radical movement which Jesus inaugurated. Attempting to gain their souls, they have lost the kingdom. In reaction to this, groups such as the Corrymeela Reconciliation Centre on the northern coast have emerged. Giving up on constructing a bridge between dogmatics and ethics, these groups atempt to operate together on social and practical concerns; afterwards they will work out a theory of what Christianity is in itself. One can understand this reaction, but again we must try to be faithful to the Word of God.

In both north and south, the charismatic movement is growing in strength. Will it be able to bring Catholic and Protestant together in a new body? Will its concern for devotion to Christ be spelled out into practical service? It seems to me that what started out as a radical spiritual movement is becoming the devotional wing of the official churches. The groups as they arise seem to be increasingly Catholic or Protestant in their theology, indicating that this movement is not transcending the sectarian divide.

An alternative

It is one thing to speak one's mind, to pull everything down around oneself like a blind Samson. It is another to identify an alternative and to rebuild. If any current situation illustrates this truth, it is Ireland. What then could one find as a common source for the preparation of an Irish theology? Naturally, the Protestant would reply, this source must be the Word of God. The Catholic would certainly admit it as a source, the most important source, but still only one of several sources. But both approaches oversimplify. In Britain the Bible was part of the story of national liberation and has molded the whole development of English literature and language. Against this, in Ireland British rule used the Bible to sanction its imperialism and to destroy the dignity of Gaelic-speaking people. The form of British rule was colonialism, the content Protestantism. Even the nonconformity of the 17th century was introduced as part of the war machine of Oliver Cromwell. The English troops carried the Geneva Bible, which in its notes confused Canaanites with Catholics and thereby gave license to kill. One of the great theologians of Puritan England was John Owen, who was Cromwell's chaplain on his Irish expedition. Irishmen cannot read the theology of Protestants such as Owen in a vacuum.

Since Irish experience of the Bible has been different from that of the English, we need a sensitivity and critical awareness of our own past. We dare not forget the past, but it is necessary for us to repent and to make a common discovery of God's Word to us. Some contemporary Christians feel the need to replace the Bible with a socialist or Marxist interpretation of industrialized society, since the biblical writings are prescientific. This is especially the case in South America, where right wing totalitarian states have in the past had the backing of the Catholic church. In Ireland, as in Europe after the wars of religion, many have tended not to look for a new theology to overcome the impasse on our island, but to blame religion for the problem. Many are increasingly eager to depend on reason to explain our existence in a new "Enlightenment." Only in such a climate can socialism or Marxism flourish and make sense to the masses as in most of Western Europe, where totally different social structures exist and where only five percent adhere to religious practice.

All the available evidence suggests that the importation of Marxism into Ireland from secular cultures would be about as successful as the introduction of banana culture. In Ireland we still have a religious world view. Ninety-one percent of the Catholic population attends mass weekly. The demythologizing attempts of a libral or Marxist variety go against the Irish context. What these attempts can do is to make us view the Bible not only as a message

of spiritual salvation, but also of social liberation.

If Protestantism has bad connotations, we need to examine other historical models which radicalize our gospel without demythologizing it. One such model is the Anabaptist movement of the 16th century whose adherents were persecuted by both Catholics and Protestants. As the radical wing of the Protestant Reformation, the Anabaptists went beyond the divisive shortcomings of the Protestantism we have known here in Ireland; yet they challenged the sacral institutions of Catholicism. They are also instructive in that associated with them were also extremists of a spiritual and violent revolutionary type.

Certainly one lesson we need to learn is that the practice of sectarian ecclesiology as experienced in Britain does not necessarily provoke radicality. The movement from Rome through Anglicans, Independents, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists to Brethren does not guarantee biblical faith and practice. People may move within these parameters and find that the only change is at a doctrinal level, while in social terms the nonconformists were the most conformist to the patterns of their societies. I am not arguing that truth does not matter. Rather it matters so much that if taking up these various positions does not lead to real radical Christianity, then they remain mind games. Also I am not questioning acting on the truth when we receive it, but I am suggesting that the way to be faithful will inevitably be "sectarian." It does not have to follow the historical development outlined above. The early Christians stayed in the temple until they were put out; Paul preached in the synagogue and only moved out when forced to. The task for Catholics, charismatics, Baptists, and members of the Church of Ireland is not to leave the churches they are in, but rather to confront them until they accept or reject the gospel. Only after real confrontation should any action be taken to bring a new reality into being. The Church is God's creation, and for man to start a church is to incur the judgment of God.

Authority

How are we going to reach truth and what is our authority? Traditionally, Protestants have argued that authority derives from the Word of God. Catholics have stated much the same thing but have meant something different. For them the Word of God has two elements: sacred Scripture and sacred tradition interpreted by the teaching office of the church called the magisterium. Hans Kung, in his book *The Church, Infallible?,* argues that it is wrong to locate authority in its ultimate sense in either the church or Scripture. I agree. Final authority rests in the infallible God, and only secondarily in Scripture. Where one would have to disagree with Kung is on the issue of an infallible God revealing Himself through fallible scriptures. Scripture, which is an expression of God's desire to communicate as personal Being to personal beings, takes on God's quality of infallibility.

I would argue that God then is our ultimate authority, and that we find His will most clearly and fully in sacred Scripture. A relative and subordinate authority is the tradition of the church throughout the ages. Lest we pretend otherwise, we are all subject to tradition; those who say they believe in the Bible alone often do so within the framework of the culture and times of James I! Finally, it is God the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. The Scriptures are for individuals, but not for individualistic use. The Bible is given to the church as the body of Christ, and it is in this context that the Spirit gives His gifts to every member to help build up this community.

Church History

In an Irish theology church history would need to be taught from a different perspective. We Irishmen have tended to follow the history of Western Christianity through the Roman Empire, forgetting that Ireland was not part of that Empire. In the early period of Christianization we did not experience anything comparable to the Constantinian settlement on the greater European mainland where groups like the Saxons and Franks were forcibly converted to "Christ," paganism was banned, and Christianity became the established religion of the Empire.

The ministry of Patrick turned the Irish from a race of cruel conquerors, whose galleys spread terror along the coasts of Britain and Gaul, into a race whose enthusiasm was for missionary labor. Certainly the ministry of this man should be very important for any Irish theology which wants to rid itself of the near pagan accretions linked to his name. In Ireland there was a synthesis of the old pagan learning and Christianity, and the missionary method was infiltration, not martyrdom. This led to a confusion of Irishness and Christianity. Infiltrators tend to lose their radical posture toward the rulers, as can still be seen today. Then we need to study the impact of Irish Christianity on Britain and Europe represented by such people as Columba, who became the patron saint of Scotland. In church history we need to develop an independent approach and see the conection between our past and our present experience. It seems that this is an area in which we Irish are not as interested in history as we claim to be.

Irish theology—some themes

The main themes of an Irish theology will be to draw out the lines of the movement that God brought into existence at Pentecost. It will be a movement which has continuity with the history in which it finds itself, which is God's history; yet it will point to the culmination of messianic salvation when Christ returns. It will announce that we live in the last days, in the days of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It will declare the need for repentance in order to receive personal and social salvation within the family of God. It will view the Body of Christ as the

provisional wing of the Kingdom of God which by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection is called to be an alternative people in the world. It will be a meeting place of all races and all backgrounds in which class distinctions will disappear.

Its politico-religious work will first be to be a community of sharing and then to bring about justice and peace in the world. Its theological task will combine the theme of a gospel of good news for the poor with the theme of spiritual liberation from self-love within the context of our Irish history. Irish theology will not be just an academic pursuit; it must follow the model of Jesus. It will become involved with those needing salvation—the hungry, the oppressed, and the violent; the fully integrated and the rich already have their reward. It will take the politics of Jesus seriously and will not allow institutions to get in the way of the cross. Only in this way will it be Christian.

Irish theology will not reject the universalism of the gospel, but it believes that the road necessarily passes through the particular. Particularism follows the path adopted by God in sending His son Jesus Christ through the Jewish nation. In all our thinking it is the Messiah, the only obedient servant, one particular individual, who will guide us through the successive stages of development. "The Lord says, 'Here is my servant, whom I strengthen—the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled him with my spirit, and he will bring justice to every nation. He will not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches in the streets. He will not break off a bent reed or put out a flickering lamp. He will bring lasting justice to all. He will not lose hope or courage; he will establish justice on the earth. Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching.' " (Isaiah 42:1-4).

A TIME OF LOSS AND A TIME FOR REPENTANCE

David A. Shank

Review of Burkholder, John Richard and Redekop, Calvin (eds.), *Kingdom, Cross and Community: Essays on Mennonite Themes in Honor of Guy F. Hershberger.* Scottdale, Pa., and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1976, Pp. 323, $12.95.

This **Festschrift**, an eightieth-birthday tribute to Goshen College professor emeritus, Guy F. Hershberger, is a collection of 16 essays by as many scholars—all except one with earned doctorates—plus a complete bibliography of Hershberger's writings from 1922-1976, compiled by his daughter, Elizabeth H. Bauman. She and Emma LaRocque are the two women contributors to what is clearly an expression of Mennonite academic power. The Mennonite Church archivist calls it "the most important book published in the past twenty years." The publisher claims the writers "assess the impact of Hershberger's thought and project directions for the community of faith."

The essayists are professors, deans and a president from four Mennonite colleges, two scholars from Canadian and American universities, two Mennonite and Brethren seminary professors, a North American Indian author-graduate of a Mennonite college and seminary, two archivist-historians, and a secretary of a Mennonite church board. All the contributors, with the exception of the woman-Indian and the Brethren theologian, are "ethnic" Mennonites with well-known names: Bauman, Burkholder, Gross, Juhnke, Kraus, Kreider, Lapp, Lind, Peachey, Redekop, Schlabach, and Smucker.

It is therefore an internal self-analysis and appraisal of 50 years of Mennonite Church experience by a limited part of that church. Twelve of the 16 contributors work within Mennonite institutions, and 10 of those with educational institutions. Ten out of the 16 live in the Goshen-Elkhart, Indiana area.

Taking Hershberger's work as the focus of that analysis necessarily loads the appraisal in favor of ethics—particularly nonresistance—and sociology—particularly community. Thus the title: **Kingdom** (ethics), **Cross** (nonresistance), and **Community**. The editors are to be commended for their collection and the organization of the materials; the writers for their candor, sometimes freshness, occasional brilliance. The writing of history around one man's work can enlighten a period in new ways (Schlabach, Kreider, Gross). To suggest "directions for the future of the church" from that same limited perspective can also be revealing and helpful if such a volume becomes part of a larger dialogue. Such dialogue is sorely needed because in the last quarter of this century "we do not have a Mennonite vision that is quite as nicely focused as either the Anabaptist Vision or the Mennonite Community idea of two and three decades ago."

Is it pretentious to suggest that that focus might yet be found in the clarity of Hershberger's own contribution to the volume, a sermon he preached two weeks after the Fourth of July, 1971, entitled, "Our Citizenship is in Heaven"? When he notes "a few specific things which the heavenly citizen does to hold the world together—this alien world in which he dwells as a stranger and pilgrim," Hershberger identifies a stance. That stance says specifically, "First, he is obedient to the Great Commission as given by our Lord in Matthew 28:18-20. Take a good hard look at these words. Weigh each one carefully and you will see in them everything of which we have been speaking and much more."

How has the American-Canadian Mennonite church fulfilled its Christ-given mandate within the North American continent in the middle half of the twentieth century? The volume was not published to answer that question. Yet we may appropriately analyze it from that perspective in a mission bulletin, given the honored one's own statement of priorities. This does not mean a look at the **indigenous** American Mennonite church; that is only

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hinted at briefly in the LaRocque essay. The **indigenous** church's powerlessness is seen not as an act of faith, but as an inability to determine its own way of life because it lacks the power to achieve its ends in the larger society and even in relation to the larger minority, the Mennonite church. For a part of that larger society is the imported European **colonial** Mennonite church in a land that she helped to win in the pioneering that had practically come to an end by 1925 when Hershberger began teaching at Goshen College.

The power-powerlessness relationship between the **colonial** church and the **indigenous** church can be painfully symbolized by "the American flag in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Pine Ridge Reservation. . . ." For it raises the question of how genuinely open the American Mennonite church is to Christ's commission, and to what extent "the focused vision and institutional vigor . . . is profoundly reflective of American culture [with] American ways of asserting and maintaining their identity as Mennonites" (Juhnke). Schlabach's reminder of the threefold Jeffersonian influence in Hershberger may seem out of place; yet I well recall how as a secularized American freshman at Goshen College, I was impressed with the interpretation of the role of the Anabaptists in the democratic development. It legitimated the Mennonite tradition for me. By contrast, LaRocque seemed to feel pressures of cultural Mennonitism—the ethnic church—more from the perspective of "plain clothing, coverings, shoofly pies and 'Gott ist die Liebe' in four-part harmony." But that was not the real problem for her. Rather it is to be found in the "power-powerlessness" nature of the meeting of ethnic groups, where the **servanthood** of voluntary service becomes in fact a form of **mastery**. At that level, any shared difference is **imposed** rather than selective acceptance.

The paradigm here dwelt upon may seem drawn out in a review of 16 essays. But it is that one which gives proper perspective to the others, particularly when J. Lawrence Burkholder suggests that "the question which faces the church is how to use power in a Christian way." Be that as it may, a thread runs through the book that "things are now different than what they were" when Hershberger began 50 years ago. What one of Hershberger's colleagues saw in 1927 as the "Golden Age of the Mennonite church [which] is yet to come," two of his students now see clearly as the time of the "loss of innocence" (theological, for Norman Kraus; ethical, for J. L. Burkholder). But one of their non-Goshen colleagues probes deeper in his echoing of Robert Friedmann's "loss of **Gelassenheit.**" Donovan Smucker calls **Gelassenheit** "the climate within which a radical new approach to life developed . . . complete self-denial and voluntary surrender to the will of God."

This loss has occurred during the same time that government has changed in size, scope, function, and processes, so that today "there is no alternative to accepting the significance, even preeminence of modern government and our involvement with it" (John Redekop). Simultaneously, there was developing "the enormous array of church institutions and programs whose need for money is almost insatiable" (Smucker). And thus, "the basic problem has been that members of this tradition have tended to ignore or deny the reality of institutions and power within its own borders. In its relationship with institutions and power in the world, there is even more ambiguity and lack of clarity" (Calvin Redekop).

What then can we do in the face of this loss and the problems that we now face? Theologically, it calls for development of a "third way" theology which would be more than simply theological conservatism with Anabaptist emphases added on. This means a "theology for the disciple community" which is "situational" and whose goal is to "serve the church in understanding its message, mission, and strategy . . . [where] the Spirit is the fundamental requisite for the existence of the church. [Scripture] must remain an instrument of the continuing action of that same Spirit . . . [and] we would take salvation instead of creation as the primary theological category. . . . The basic question for the church today is: What is the shape of the new thing that God is creating among us and how shall we respond to it in obedience" (Kraus)? This must be done with an awareness that "miracle"—Exodus, Sinai, resurrection, the present rule of God in Christ—is an essential element, yes, the crucial question of biblical faith and the only "possibility of independent structures for the faithful church" (Millard Lind).

Ethically, however, it means a turning from the "nonfunctioning absolutism [of noncoercive nonresistance] to a functioning relativism [of a potentially coercive nonviolence] with regard to some perplexing contemporary issues. . . . What is called for is a Mennonite ethic that will justify in theory what is generally accepted in practice" (J. L. Burkholder). But what is that practice?

1. ". . . for many Mennonites, the very thought of church-sponsored ethical discussion is distasteful. Consequently much of the brotherhood has adopted a laissez-faire attitude toward such issues and has accepted in effect what amounts to an individualist situational ethic" (J. R. Burkholder).

2. "How can we speak clearly in opposition to capital punishment, racism, the exploitation of women, and other matters on which we believe the biblical directive is clear, when a significant segment of the free church community opposes the perspective we believe to be biblical" (John Redekop)?

3. "The vast array of church-related institutions supported by voluntary contributions now demand an affluent, business-oriented church [with] successful farmers and prosperous businessmen, active in the marketplace, striving to expand, eager to innovate, always dissatisfied with present sales and service. . . . Even the Protestant ethic is modified toward consumerism and free spending by that bourgeoisie society. The ambitious plans and fiscal needs of our schools and other institutions suggest we need more not less expansion in the market" (Smucker).

I agree that there is a clear need for a faith based on miracle where we affirm with the prophets that the "**locus** of power is outside historical existence" (Lind, quoting McKane). But is this the same as the need for a decision "to more into new and uncharted waters [where] we must incorporate into our ethical calculus such realities as power, complexity, relativity, tension, and compromise" (J. L. Burkholder)?

But where does one get direction for that faith and affirmation since a social strategy based on nonresistance is inadequate? By accepting Jesus' politics as relevant (J. L. Burkholder, J. R. Burkholder, J. Redekop and Brown) for it "posits a clear alternative to both the ethics and the politics associated with the 'responsible' **status quo** of society." it means **taking the side of** the poor, the oppressed, the powerless and thus **involvement** and **confrontation** with the powers of injustice and violence, "the creation of an ethical counter-community," where nonresistance becomes the "only appropriate resonse for those who have chosen to follow their Lord faithfully in the way of the cross" (J.

R. Burkholder).

But would this not in fact call for a restoration of the **Gelassenheit** model? Unfortunately, says Smucker, that "is no longer an option; [it] is incompatible with the highly motivated entrepreneur of the free market, and confrontation is incompatible with . . . North American pluralisms."

On the other hand, Harold Bauman assumes that it is possible and illustrates it with house churches in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, the Church of the Redeemer in Houston, Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, and the Assembly in Goshen where precisely the "normlessness of the spiritualist . . . or of . . . individualism" is avoided. But, says Smucker, this cannot be the way for the majority. As illustrated at least by the Holdeman Mennonites and the Amish, such a pattern eventually calls for capitalistic restraints; and this means reduced support from gifts from surpluses, "the financial lifeblood of the rich institutional life." And with capitalistic restraints goes inevitably limited outreach.

In other words, what J. R. Burkholder and Bauman propose as essential to our mission, Smucker declares is not possible because of our institutions—which help us to carry out our mission and which required a different model!

Then we had better take a new look at our institutions! Calvin Redekop does. These he defines as "the normative system which develops to achieve values" with establishment of positions, norms and facilities. This is not the church, but is **in addition to** the church. The church **is**, but **has** institutions, just as the church **is**, and **has** a mission. Such an understanding gives us the possibility of critiquing the institutions. (:This was also Brunner's way of dealing with the **corpus christianum** hangover of the European church.) According to Redekop the church is "pure **Koinonia**" or "relationship between persons"; institutions are structures of power, for getting the job done, for carrying out the mission. This is no longer in a "pure" church context but in a gray area where the Christian church does most of its living. Since we cannot ask the institution to be "pure" fellowship like the church's own normative system, we must develop tools for critiquing it in its grayness, where it tends to "militate against the communal dimension of the Christian faith." But it only becomes problematical and in tension when it "tends to undermine the fellowship aspect of the Christian experience." What critique can we use? When the institution—normative system which develops to achieve values, on the one hand, the power structure, on the other hand—uses its power "to assist others to become powerful, also, it is in line with social values and Christian tradition." For example, "If knowledge is power, then a teacher is actively engaged in distribution of power, for he helps others to achieve as much power as he has (and if he is fortunate to have a few bright students, may be making them more powerful than he is)." In any case we dare not critique the institutions on the basis of the different types of authority (legitimate, recognized, **de facto**). Rational—or elected, traditional, or charismatic authorities are all three valid since all three are present in the developoment of the Christian movement.

Since the institution and its power is seen as the crucial issue, we must spend a little time here. The resume just given is too brief. But it underscores two misunderstandings. The first grows out of the Kraus and Lind essays: The former calls for a theology where the Spirit is the essential requisite for the existence of the church, and the latter for a recognition that the **locus** of power is outside of historical existence. This does not mean that we know "pure" Spirit. The only Spirit that we know is He who interacts with His creation and especially with the creature, particularly in Israel and fully in the Messiah, Jesus, and His church. In that incarnation there is **instituted** a normative system and power structure; mission is not added on to something else that is essential. "Getting it done" is of the essence; there is not something else purer than getting it done. The Redekop description sets up an unhelpful dualism between the church and its institutions which is not consistent with the incarnation. The second misunderstanding is related to Weber's definition of charismatic which is different from that of the New Testament. In the New Testament, whatever authority—be it rational, traditional, or charismatic—must all be charismatically given, that is as a gift of the Spirit. Since an institution is developed as an expression of an **inherent function** of the people of God rather than just an emerging need, as Bauman spells out so well, it behooves the people of God to determine whether the function defines the form or whether the changing institution redefines the function. In his analysis Redekop recognizes that the form can be different from the function—the "gray area" as compared to the "pure fellowship"—as long as it does not undermine it. The New Testament criterion, "Does it build up the body [of the people of God]" is different from that which asks, "Is it bringing others up to its level? Is it helping others to become powerful like itself?" "Is the institution doing the Spirit's work?" must remain the critical criterion. It is essential to know whether elected, traditional, or charismatic authority is Spirit-given or not; it is crucial to know whether that essential requisite, the **locus** of power outside historical existence, is functional or not. For power-sharing, as described by Redekop, in its simplest form can also be institutional self-preservation. It is the usual way in which institutions perpetuate themselves.

In the situation presented by this volume, particularly in the Smucker analysis, the institutions require a certain socioeconomic model to subsist, and thus themselves determine the "level" up to which they bring others and the "nature of the power" to disseminate. The scientific model for critique that Redekop gives could easily be confused with the J. R. Burkholder appeal from Jesus' politics to "identify with the oppressed, the poor, the victims." But the contemporary context, if the description which the volume gives is correct, conveys the opposite meaning, the very thing which LaRocque decried, a power-powerlessness relationship, as compared to Kraus' "new thing that God is creating among us."

What is needed is the **Gelassenheit** model where, as Smucker puts it, there is a "total flinging of self into the heart of a Spirit-filled fellowship radiant with Messianic Kingdom awareness." The institutions, however, require another model which excludes **Gelassenheit,** and, according to Smucker, they perpetuate that other model. And Redekop says that the only criterion for judgment of an institution is whether it is bringing others into line with those values that it respresents. If it does that, it is beyond judgment. Smucker suggests setting aside the rhetoric of the Anabaptist situation of the sixteenth century and seeing what models we **ought** to have in the light of a fair and accurate description of the economic and social institutions that we do in fact have. While we look for models, he says, the institutions "whose need for money is almost insatiable" will look over our shoulders, and "over their shoulders will be looking the heralds of the kingdom of God."

Of course! Redekop told us that the institutions were created

in the first place to carry out that mission of heralding the Kingdom, to get the job done! Is the Anabaptist rhetoric not, after all, preferable?

One could of course become discouraged by the limited alternatives offered. There is the Peachey alternative: "To organize a believer's church, that is to effect a social organization with a life of its own, not necessarily rooted in the dynamic of grace, leads in the end to a replication of the Roman Catholic confusion. Christ's community is diffused within the society of the 'world.' It is not a separate nation or a social subsystem or group within the society or world." Of course, we rejected that replication along with Redekop's analysis! But what about a believers church rooted in the dynamics of grace and faith and the Word and the Spirit?

Then there is Smucker's alternative: either "capitalistic restraint plus limited outreach or large outreach supported by business surpluses." The two major missionary movements of outreach to which we are related, that of the first century church and the sixteenth century Anabaptists, were basically built upon the **Gelassenheit** model. And the modern missionary movement, which almost missed us in the nineteenth century, was in its earliest days built on that model. The more "successful" missions of the later nineteenth century were built on the "Christianity, commerce and civilization" model. But that model is now generally rejected as a pattern for missions.

From the traditional Marxist sociological critique of a human context in terms of the threefold socioeconomic, political, and ideological dimensions of existence, this volume would indicate that the Mennonite church is threatened with religio-political, ideological capitulation (Lapp, J. Redekop) because the socioeconomic substructure of the political superstructure is already totally integrated (Smucker). The ideological shift (Smucker, J. L. Burkholder) is inevitable, although we ought to work to ward it off (Kraus, Burkholder, Lapp, J. Redekop).

From the point of view of religious development, we are face to face with the problem of syncretism. There is not only not a "pure fellowship" (C. Redekop), there is not a "pure message." And this then raises serious problems about the worldwide "mission" of the North American Mennonite church and calls for nothing less than repentance.

But how do institutions repent, since they are doing all of the undermining (J. Redekop, Smucker)? In the present dialectic between institutions **of** the church and the church itself (using the unfortuante Brunner-C. Redekop model), it is the institutions and their needs which are determining the socioeconomic substructures of the church itself (Smucker). The only way to repentance then is that which Smucker rules out as an option. It is the restoration of the **Gelassenheit** model, whose members work out, in the "vast area of gray . . . where the Christian church does most of its living," their critique of the institution from within on the basis of the "pure fellowship" (C. Redekop). But the latter is apparently more than what Redekop sees—a fellowship of commitment to live out the light, in the midst of the gray. That is to say, that it is only to the extent that the Bauman model becomes functional that there is a possibility for repentance within the institutions. As normlessness disappears, norms can again function within the institutions. But even more, it is only to the extent that it becomes functional that there is a message of grace and faith which is credible. Otherwise, the local church, following the institutions, becomes a part of and thus reflection of the political-socioeconomic establishment.

For a church that is thus established in the wealthiest and most powerful political and economic area of the world, its establishment itself is its greatest hindrance to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Is the church recallable? Yes, with a call from the **locus** of power outside of historical existence, in His own time and in His own way. And, listening to Him, we can repent with structures of repentance. Here is the really creative work to be done in the midst of apostasy. Peachey called for it in 1956: "a thoroughgoing restitution, which **may** cost us much of our wealth and even our church institutions" (cited by J. R. Burkholder). Is it stil too late? Even Peachey no longer believes it possible.

"Having adjusted my priorities from 'what will work' to 'how best to be faithful' I have now come to feel that this less practical way from the viewpoint from the world's wisdom might point to an even greater realism. Rather than assuming that it is easy to calculate the consequences of ethical decisions in our complicated world, it is probably more realistic to recognize the impossibility of ever knowing the total context of our actions and thereby being able to predict the results of our actions. This assumption—that the foolishness of God's way is wiser than the wisdom of our social schemes—should be instructive in terms of how we relate to the powers and principalities" (Brown). C. Redekop and Smucker remind us that our own church institutions are included in that category.

But Brown is a Brethren. Which recalls the plain coat wearing Mennonite convert from Philadelphia Presbyterianism. When I asked him where he had gotten his plain coat, he smiled broadly and replied, "I exchanged my set of golf clubs for it with a Mennonite going in the other direction." Was this also the experience of Robert Friedmann who felt in 1955 that "with the recovery of the ideal of discipleship also **Gelassenheit** may be revived" (quoted by Smucker)?

The messianic context of Anabaptist **Gelassenheit,** parallel to that of the first century church, and simliar to that of the eighteenth century creation of missionary motivation, is the real loss. The "messianic community" (J. R. Burkhjolder, Smucker) has meaning only within the dynamics of messianism. The essential eschatological thrust of such a dynamics only occasionally appears in the volume (Brown, Kraus, Gross, Lind); the nature of the volume itself may bear upon its lack. That this dimension was dynamically present in Hershberger is clear from the sources cited by Gross; but even here the dynamic, albeit an essential motor, may itself not be clearly communicated. From the perspective of the original priority with which we opened the review, the Messianic Commission to disciple all nations, we can undoubtedly say that the recovery of the messianic dynamic of the Suffering Servant, as fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, is the most urgent task for this generation and the only focus for vision.

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Contents

Vietnam: I Wouldn't Do It Again, James E. Metzler
Walking with Vietnamese Christians, James Klassen
Implications of the Vietnam Experience for World Mission, Luke S. Martin

VIETNAM: I WOULDN'T DO IT AGAIN

James E. Metzler

The most intriguing yet difficult question in a review of our Vietnam experience is: Did we belong there during the decade of America's involvement? There is no doubt that the Spirit has been able to use our witness and service. We have ministered to the needs of a multitude of suffering people. And the impact of our witness is reaching to the present and holds promise for the future.

Yet I know that I feel this way largely because of an outcome that was very favorable to our position. The ending permitted us to demonstrate dramatically how we felt all along but had little chance to prove. My attitude about my involvement would be quite different if the B-52's, napalm and Smart bombs had been able to crush the people's aspirations, as the U.S. was able to do 60 years earlier in the Philippines. Yet even so, when we ever read the story of that decade of tragic suffering from the Vietnamese viewpoint, how will our presence look?

Association With the Political-Military Machine

I sense that few Mennonites in America have sufficient awareness of our identity crisis in Vietnam to grapple realistically with the question. One has to feel that overwhelming load of assumptions placed on any overseas church worker by the Vietnamese. We were yoked with a century of observations on church-state cooperation under French colonialism. And these images were being reinforced by most U.S. missionaries, diplomats and military personnel.

To most Vietnamese it was simply unbelievable that any American would be sent to their land at such a time for any reason other than to support "the cause" in some way. We could not be sure that even those who knew us best really believed that we had no Washington support, embassy directives, military privileges or CIA connections.

In a civil conflict of such intensity, we must remember that the war is the only issue. It permeates everything affecting loyalties and resources. Everything said or done becomes part of the struggle and is viewed as helping one side or the other. Our policy was to help all Vietnamese alike on the basis of need. But security and logistics made it impossible to help both sides equally. So the benefits were reaped largely by the Saigon government. Ironically, our efforts can be viewed as prolonging the war and increasing the pain.

By supplying the people's necessities, we freed the government to use its funds for more destruction. Our assistance made the war more tolerable for the victims, reducing the pressure needed to end the fighting and bring negotiations. At times I wanted to organize the refugees to protest the wanton destruction of their lives and property. It would have been no more political than building them a third or fourth house, which reduced their bitterness against the destroyers. We gave bread in the name of Christ; they saw Americans with Saigon government permits handing out U.S. surplus goods for

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the interests of both governments. All our work had political import.

Another implicating factor was the inclusiveness of the pacification program. Pacification means that friendship and social services are as vital as fighting. Top priority is placed on "winning the hearts and minds of the people," for the war is won or lost on the shift of loyalties. This causes the military and government to engage in the same activities as relief agencies. At times they even worked as partners. The military created the refugees and casualties, then asked the church agency to care for them—to pacify them literally!

Even one's presence is useful in pacification. Being a good neighbor and a sympathetic American built attractive images, countering the repulsive aggressor roles of other Americans. Even evangelism is seen as supporting the cause, for few can imagine a Christian not being pro-Western! In such settings there is no way one can escape being used for purposes contrary to our spirit.

What are the liabilities of citizenship? Especially in a democracy where the President claims support from the "silent majority" for his action! Can our plea of neutrality have any credibility if we continue working closely with our nation's military endeavor? Especially when that action is widely condemned by many peoples?

Some church leaders felt we ought not speak of "**our** government" or "**our** troops," which might be an important distinction for us. But for the Vietnamese, that was merely playing with words. Certainly the U.S. government considered and claimed our work as a vital part of theirs. I ask the question: Is there no situation where we should forfeit the right to represent the Kingdom because of our nation's action in that place?

Association with American Religiosity

I now realize that another crucial aspect of our identity problem was our close association with other Protestant groups. We were unable to establish a separate self within the Christian family. And this was most critical in regards to our peace witness, which was vital to our being in a conflict without appearing as part of it.

We affirmed the way of suffering love and peace-making it central to the gospel. We regularly used opportunities to teach Christ's stance against violence. The Mennonite Church in Vietnam evidenced a keen awareness of the social implications of the gospel, emphasizing reconciliation and service in the community. And I believe that our influence on the Protestant churches definitely fostered a broader vision of the Christian life.

Yet our membership never took a stance opposing warfare for the Christian and was not seen as a "peace" group. Full fellowship was given to members in the military. An air force officer served as director of the mission's student center. I am not aware of any person who—on the basis of biblical teaching concerning the will of God—declared a readiness to face prison, torture and death rather than to kill.

Robert Ramseyer's excellent critique, "The Christian Peace Witness and Our Missionary Task: Are Mennonites Evangelical Protestants with a Peace Witness?"[1] is a good description of our self-perception. We had almost no contact with the Buddhist monks who opposed the war courageously. Nor did we attempt to seek out those who went to prison rather than to the army. Somehow it seemed easier to associate with those who said "Lord, Lord" while "praying" for more bombs on Hanoi and to ignore those who may have done God's will without saying the right words!

A Buddhist student attending an evangelistic service at our center one week and the Alliance or Baptist meeting down the street the next week would not likely have sensed any clear difference in our presentation. We saw ourselves as fellow Protestant groups, basically doing the same thing in the same way, differing mostly in degrees of concern or points of emphasis.

We were simply reflecting the theology we were raised and trained in, which divorced salvation and ethics. In evangelism we focus only on the basics for salvation, and our basics are essentially the same as others. But we expect more in the end. Mennonites include "extras" that later on require a deeper commitment. My theology was symbolized by a ladder. Our view of the Christian life has more rungs at the top—the surer to get there!

However, one doesn't start at the top rung, certainly not a rung that is rejected by most other Christians! So we had vigorous discussions when confronted with the prospect of baptizing four young men as the first Vietnamese Mennonites. The youths understood our stand for biblical pacifism, could affirm alternate service for us in America, but it just wasn't practical for them.

We knew they would likely join the army when called. Yet they were followers of Christ and were growing in their commitment. Was it not better to recognize their desire to be identified with Christ through baptism and trust the Spirit to lead them to a fuller acceptance of His will? We baptized them; and in time all four were drafted. The precedent was set and followed.

Someone asked recently—on the basis of the very same rationale—why didn't we baptize and accept as members any of the hundreds of thousands of prostitutes who felt they had to sell their bodies to support their families or find safety? Is killing more acceptable than sexual immorality even among pacifists?

My present view is that we started at the wrong place and asked the wrong questions. We overlooked the fact that the Christ who is received and followed depends on the Christ who is presented. Either peace wasn't as

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Litho in USA

integral to the gospel as we thought—or it wasn't the gospel that was received!

Like most other Mennonite missionaries of this century, we had tried to attach an Anabaptist ethic to a Protestant theology of salvation and model of missions. We were calling others to a lifestyle that we were not prepared to support. We (like our other missions) not only failed to reproduce an essential element of our faith, we were all but engulfed in a hodgepodge of American Protestantism. Our associations and self-understanding greatly compromised our gospel of peace and muffled our witness against the war. Being identified with a local group who opposed the war would have increased our visibility and credibility.

Why I Would Not Do It Again

In the days of my agonizing about whether I belonged there or not, a Quaker friend shared: "Relevant Christianity is a daily practice of the art of compromise." My leaders tried to help by pointing to Jesus and Hosea who accepted vast misunderstanding. But could my suffering and possible death be redemptive if caused by identification with wrongdoing rather than for righteousness? At least Jesus died as a peasant Zealot and not as a sold-out Herodian or a conquering Roman!

The question that continues to haunt me is this: Did we miss the ultimate witness? Were we brought to the stage of the world's kingdoms for that very moment—and failed to stand? A few Americans, including several Mennonites working in other agencies, gave up their right to remain and serve in Vietnam by an open protest against the war. But not one staff member of our church agencies ever made such a decision. Why?

I am convinced that there was a witness that could and should have been made. America's intervention, clearly supported by the American churches and missionaries, verified all the associations of Christianity with the white, militant, dominating West. The greatest witness we could have given in Asia in 1968 would have been a clear exception to that impression.

We would have had to do something as newsworthy as the publicized statements of Billy Graham or Cardinal Spellman. The resignation of the IVS leaders did that, but they were not recognized as a church group. Asia desperately needed one courageous act by the Church—just three youth to stand unbowed inside the fiery furnace! Thankfully, that symbol of hope was raised in 1975. Yet even our staying after "the collapse" would have been enhanced if others had made an open resignation earlier.

No, I would not repeat my experience in Vietnam. Not that I regret having been there. Nor because I feel the entire team should have left. But because our witness could have been more dramatic and effective.

I would not serve again in an American organization in an area where my nation is involved in such an action. Why couldn't we have used a European office and at least a half Afro-Asian staff? Were we even open to the counsel of our European brotherhood? When we did try to recruit Japanese brothers and sisters, a typical response was: "Why help the South?" There was some effort to internationalize the staff. But there was never any doubt that we were just another American agency. If we really believe in a universal community of faith, we will find ways to lessen the liabilities of citizenship.

I would not serve again in a confusing, highly-emotional conflict without better communications and firmer support from the home base. It's a myth to think that those in the thick of the battle know best what's happening and should even be the analysts for the home church. We sorely needed a team of leaders/scholars to specialize on the conflict . . . to view both "the forest and the trees" by periodic dialogue with the staff on the field . . . and to be a voice for the staff to the home base. Such a team could give objective and specific counsel to both administrative and field personnel in a supportive way.

I would not serve again in a mission following the classical Protestant pattern. I would seek rather to extend the Kingdom by serving among the people and inviting them to live in the shalom of God with me. I would be more concerned to demonstrate a model of faithful discipleship in wholesome relationships than in verbalizing a foreign message. And, like the Apostle Paul, I'd be more realistic in choosing where and how I can be God's messenger to another culture and race.

Finally, I would not serve again in a similar setting without a keener awareness for the meaning of presence and the impact of images. I would be more ready to forfeit an institution, program or presence that contributes more to a negative, ear-stopping image than countering it. Like Jesus, I would at times consider my absence to be as strategic as my presence. Immediate needs dare not be the only criteria for determining presence.

A striking note about the Vietnam issue has been the sudden and nearly total silence about it in evangelical circles these past two years. It's like closing completed chapters of a book: first China . . . then Vietnam . . . and next _____ . Missions seemingly find it very difficult to be self-critical. In good Calvinistic fashion, "the Lord of history" gets the blame or credit for doors that close or open. The only responsibility missions appear to accept in the matter is to decide which is which and to keep moving along with the times.

I am grateful for our church's efforts both to learn from history and to strive to shape it. We have been given a unique opportunity for influence and witness in Southeast Asia today. And if Vietnam has enabled us also to gain some political maturity, universal sensitivity and cultural humility—then our experience there has not been in vain.

1. Unpublished manuscript.

WALKING WITH VIETNAMESE CHRISTIANS

James Klassen

Halfway around the world in the little land of VietNam, I was a pilgrim. Although the path held many surprises, I was not walking it alone. Perhaps the situation was summed up best by two Vietnamese—one who followed the Jesus way and one who stood on the threshold of the Kingdom—when they shared these words of Camus with me:

Do not walk in front of me, I may not follow.
Do not walk behind me, I may not lead.
Walk beside me, and just be my friend.

Cloudy Skies

The rumors were vicious. The rumors were verified by "eyewitnesses." "An aunt and her entire family were massacred by the communists in BanMeThuot." Eyewitness substantiated. "All of the remaining students at the Bible Institute at NhaTrang who admitted they spoke English were shot on the spot by the communists." Eyewitness substantiated. "The Catholic Bishop in BanMeThuot was killed in cold blood by the communists." No doubt about it.

The setting was SaiGon. The time was April 1975—the eve of the American pullout. I was there.

The rumors went on and on. "There will be a fierce battle over SaiGon." "Just before the end of the SaiGon battle, the Thieu air force will drop asphyxiation bombs over the city, so the communists will march into a city of dead people." "Everyone who has ever worked for the Americans will automatically be killed by the communists." "Everyone who knows English will automatically be killed by the communists." "Everyone who has a high position in the military forces will automatically be killed by the communists." "All Americans will be killed by the communists." "All of the refugees who came from the North in 1954 will automatically be killed by the communists." "The blood-thirsty communists have no feelings." Fresh incredible rumors coupled with the exhaust fumes from the long years of bitter propaganda hung in the air like ominous clouds.

One option was to get out fast, to evacuate. Many Vietnamese Christians and their leaders saw no alternative.

Of course, Americans still associated with the U.S. military forces in VietNam also wanted out, and on Monday, April 28, the last President pro tem of the SaiGon government gave them 24 hours to get out. During those last days in April, another group was also departing: For a variety of reasons, all of the foreign Protestant missionaries left VietNam prior to April 30, 1975 (except for one independent missionary who voluntarily stayed at DaNang and the ones stuck at BanMeThuot). Although their leaving raises some theological (and political) questions, at least Vietnamese Christians who evacuated were not walking out alone.

We'll Stay

There was, however, another option. On April 22, 1975, at a meeting of humanitarian agencies in SaiGon, I listened as two Catholic Vietnamese nuns testified of their decision to stay in VietNam along with 100 others who jointly signed a statement to that effect. That same day, a Mennonite Vietnamese close personal friend of mine told me he had decided to stay, come what may, and drew up a statement for himself and other Vietnamese Mennonites to sign, including the following four points:

1. We will not leave our country regardless of what happens. . . .
2. We take the Word of God as the foundation for love and reconciliation between all people.
3. Because serving people is a beautiful thing, we must accept any difficulties or sacrifices.
4. Because of our strong faith in the eternal God, as Evangelical Christians we accept life as well as death.

Believe me, that came like a gentle refreshing rain in the midst of a scorching desert of irrationality.

Their option was also my option: I voluntarily chose to stay in SaiGon as did one of my colleagues. Although technically we were not classified as missionaries, we were volunteer workers for Mennonite Central Committee, a relatively small, church-sponsored relief and social work agency. Following my arrival on the scene in VietNam some two and a half years earlier, I found a variety of opportunities to share my conviction that the way of love and reconciliation is the Jesus way. Consequently, staying looked like the logical conclusion to what I had been saying and preaching. That, for me, was crucial.

The decision not to evacuate included other factors: My sponsoring organization MCC, along with family and friends in North America, supported that decision; two other colleagues had earlier decided to stay in Quang Ngai; I had not been associated with the U.S. military forces; SaiGon felt like home because I had been highly motivated to learn to speak Vietnamese and moved primarily in Vietnamese circles; and Vietnamese friends—some optimists, some pessimists, some Christian, some

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non-Christian—directly encouraged me to stay. According to the Bible, neither life nor death can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:38, 39), and during those last days in April 1975, I took those words very seriously. I stayed, and, in spite of the rumors, the good Lord let me go through those days with an amazing degree of serenity. The purpose of this article, then, is to share some of my experiences with Vietnamese Christians in SaiGon (now called Ho Chi Minh City) through the changeover and during the next year.

The Changeover

When April 30, 1975, dawned, no one needed a sixth sense to know that there was fighting close to SaiGon. At about 10:15 a.m. the Vietnamese radio announcer told everyone to stand by for an important announcement. At 10:30 the announcement came: there was to be a cease-fire, and the Government of the Republic of VietNam would turn its power over to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South VietNam. The rocketing stopped immediately. The war was over! It seemed like an answer to prayer.

Over the noon hour there was noticeably less traffic, but that was typical for that hot, humid, tropical country. In the afternoon traffic picked up again—going both directions in front of our house on Phan Thanh Gian Street, a major one-way thoroughfare across the city. It almost looked like a carnival atmosphere: rejoicing, not necessarily because of the new government in SaiGon, but because the war was over.

Yes, suddenly the war was over. Of all the horrible rumors we had heard, not a single one was true. Praise the Lord! That aunt and her family were well and had traveled to NhaTrang. No English-speaking students at the NhaTrang Bible Institute were shot there. The Catholic Bishop of BanMeThuot held a service to ordain a Bishop for another province. And there was no bloodbath of Christians or anyone else. Perhaps truth is stranger than fiction.

The transition from one government in SaiGon to the other on April 30 was very smooth—unlike Nha Trang earlier, for example, where the bitter ARVN (Thieu government) soldiers still had guns and ammunition, and after their improvised exodus from Pleiku, took whatever they wanted. Although I had tried to prepare myself mentally and spiritually for troubled water, there never was a breakdown of public order in SaiGon, and no one tried to break into the Mennonite Center where we were staying and where our offices were located. Incidentally, our electricity and water supply continued without interruption—little blessings perhaps, but no small matter for a city of three to four million people.

Reconstruction

Since a drastic increase in rice production was needed after the end of the war and since unemployment plagued SaiGon, some of my Christian friends were among those who voluntarily moved from the city back to the countryside, but that was no easy road. Literally millions of bomb craters needed to be filled in—the largest B-52 bomb craters being 30 feet deep and 45 feet in diameter. Yes, the war is over, but hundreds of thousands of tons of unexploded munitions still lie buried in the fertile rice paddies: mines, grenades, and bombs—ready to go off at the touch of a hoe. One member of the GiaDinh Mennonite Church on the outskirts of SaiGon moved back to his native area with his family only to be killed when his hoe struck a hidden explosive in his field. I knew him.

Religious Activities

As far as religious activities in SaiGon were concerned after April 30, 1975, the churches went right on meeting: singing, sharing, praying, and studying the Bible. More specifically, I had become rather deeply involved with a relatively young Christian fellowship at our Mennonite Center on Phan Thanh Gian Street where the first water baptism ceremonies for that group were held in February and March of 1975. When I decided not to evacuate, the earlier solidarity of the foreign Mennonites, which blurred the distinction between service-oriented MCC and evangelism-oriented VietNam Mennonite Mission, made it seem natural for me to begin teaching some of the bible classes at the Mennonite Student Center in the early spring of 1975. On Thursday afternoons I was teaching a Bible class in Vietnamese from I Peter, and on Sunday mornings I was teaching a Bible class in English from the Gospel of John. I **continued** teaching them throughout the rest of 1975 without any interference. There I was—a foreigner, a citizen of the U.S., in the role of a teacher, teaching Bible (and English, of all things) to Vietnamese who were living under a new government that had some leaders who took Karl Marx seriously.

In mid-July 1975, the newspapers carried headlines about the registration of all meetings for security reasons. The announcement then specifically mentioned church meetings, but that is hardly surprising since many Protestants and Catholics had been fervently anti-communist only a few months earlier. Some Vietnamese Christian friends of mine sadly predicted that the registration process would be long and drawn out. They were dejected because they felt the enthusiasm for meeting would disappear by the time permission to meet would be granted. Quite the opposite took place: The Vietnamese director of our Student Center spent only three days completing the entire registration process, and during that time he was also working on some family business. Registration consisted of listing the time and purpose of our weekly meetings and was, therefore, something of a formality. The continuity of our meetings was never broken. No membership lists were submitted. No one prescribed our activities. No one ever told me what I could or could not teach in my Bible classes.

In December of 1975, I also led a catechism class in a study of the Sermon on the Mount. It was good news to my Vietnamese friends that God's love still reached them, and it was a very humbling experience for me to see God's Spirit at work. A total of 12 young people acknowledged Jesus as Savior and Lord and joined our Christian fellowship through water baptism ceremonies during my year there after the end of the war. Although I was initially "the teacher," by the end of 1975 I had stepped out of the leadership role and felt that the fellowship was able to see me more as an active Christian brother than as someone with all of the answers.

Both Catholics and Protestants had continued to exist in the North after 1954—after the Geneva Accords drew the temporary demarcation line at the 17th parallel. During the next 20 years, however, Protestant missionaries—except for a precious few—generally supported political and military involvement of the U.S. in VietNam and consequently kept silent about the churches in the North. Perhaps you can imagine, then, how the rising and falling Vietnamese tones were emphasized as one of my Christian friends excitedly shared with our Fellowship on Sunday morning, January 4, 1976.

> Just last night at the regular weekly meeting for Christian students at the church on Thong Nhat Street we learned some history about the Protestant Church in the North. Before, all we heard about were the ones who came South (in 1954). There were thirteen pastors who stayed, as well as a few sturdy Christians who understood that God wasn't leaving them alone. Until 1959, they were regarded with some suspicion because so many of their number had already left; but, because none of them were involved in a scandal uncovered that year, they were respected. From 1970-1972, the young people got organized, and 40 attended a church youth conference. At the annual general conference in 1975, there were 600 delegates. . . . With that history in North VietNam—including the fact that there is open acceptance of Sunday and Thursday church meetings—it is clear that the Church cannot blame the government if the Church collapses. If the Church dies, we are the ones who have killed it.

Church Relationship to Government: Age-old Question

Down through the ages, one of the most persistent, perplexing problems for Christians has been the nature of the relationship between the church and the government. VietNam was, and is, no exception.

During the war, some 480 church buildings in North VietNam had been bombed. A delegation of Mennonites from the U.S. and Canada which visited North and South VietNam during May and June of 1976 learned that the Vietnamese government was giving some congregations in the North subsidies to help them rebuild their bombed church buildings. A "communist" government aiding Christians! While I rejoice with my Vietnamese Christian brothers and sisters who receive favors from their government, the question also comes to me, "Should they be accepting that government assistance?"

Lest we criticize those Vietnamese Christians too quickly and too harshly, listen to part of our Christian fellowship's dialogue on Sunday morning, January 18, 1976. The story was told of a friend who had seen a movie depicting Nixon as an airplane, with his nose as the nose of the airplane, his arms out at the side as the front wings, and his feet up in back as the tail of the plane, pulling a banner saying "Merry Christmas" while dropping bombs on HaNoi. It was a clear attempt to wrap Christianity, the bombing, and the Christmas of 1972 into one package. That was my first Christmas in VietNam: 1972—when Nixon ordered the intensive bombing. During those "Twelve Days of Christmas," enough explosive tonnage was dropped in North VietNam to equal a Hiroshima every two days. On that Sunday morning in 1976 when the film was mentioned, another Christian young lady responded,

> First of all, we must recognize that what Mr. Nixon did is terribly ugly, and that, secondly, what he did is even worse because he did it under the guise of religion. It is impossible for me to remain silent in the face of that, because it's clear that Jesus is not like Mr. Nixon: Jesus wants to save VietNam, not destroy it.

Perhaps we need to repent as we recall that one famous North American evangelist stood by the U.S. President during those days and years as if to baptize the bullets and bombs that were sent to Southeast Asia.

How well I recall, too, the ecstacy and agony that went through my soul on May 1, 1975, as one of our Vietnamese staff members from the GiaDinh Mennonite Church excitedly told of meeting a newly arrived Christian soldier from North VietNam with a cross painted on his canteen! You see, many Christians in the South understood that Romans 13:1-7 meant a blind obedience to government—"support the SaiGon government and fight the communists"—(ignoring the context: Romans 12:20 and 13:8 where Paul writes, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink" and "Don't owe anybody anything except love"). Ironically, the Christians in the North had also been trained earlier by some of the same missionaries. Given the history of VietNam with a thousand years of Chinese rule and a hundred years of French domination, and given the admonitions by the missionaries to obey the government, Christians in the North naturally were quite willing to take up guns to drive out the "imperialistic" U.S. The bombs which destroyed church buildings in the North, to say nothing about the Christians who were killed in the bombings, also tended to unite the remaining Christians with their government's goal to "fight the U.S. to save our homeland." The result: There were Christians on both sides of the lines pointing guns at each other. They were participating in the violence instead of proposing alternatives. Surely it must have made God very sad to see people who claimed to know

about his love pointing guns at each other and pulling the triggers.

I mentioned above the traumatic breakdown of public order at NhaTrang caused by the angry ARVN soldiers during the first days of April 1975. By that time, the collapse of the Thieu government and the disintegration of his military forces in Central VietNam were happening with such speed that NhaTrang experienced several days of total havoc before the PLA soldiers of the Provisional Revolutionary Government could arrive to start restoring some order. Not only were the rumors of communist atrocities there untrue, but I also learned later that the Dean of the NhaTrang Bible Institute went out to meet the "communist" soldiers and asked them to protect the Bible Institute from the looters. What would you have done? Had he sold out? Probably not. His action was simply a non-pacifist recognition of new governmental leadership in a very difficult situation and should be no more disturbing than actions by Christians in our country to call the police in times of riot or the action taken by the President of the Evangelical Church of (South) VietNam some two weeks earlier.

It was mid-March 1975, then, the Thieu had just canceled the deferments for religious studies. The Catholics and Buddhists, along with two indigenous Vietnamese religious sects, all protested publicly. The President of the Evangelical Church, however, went to NhaTrang and counseled the students at the Bible Institute there to follow the government orders. Two days before I left VietNam, in April 1976, during a brief visit with him, he tried to make it very clear that the Evangelical Church had not been involved in politics. What did he mean by that, in a situation like VietNam where every action had political implications?

Reorientation

For Christians who were involved in the Thieu military forces, the end of the war soon brought "hoc-tap" (study-practice) sessions, not gallows. The son of one of our former staff members from the southern delta was given three days of "reeducation" and then told to go home and do something productive. That style, consistent with the new country-wide emphasis on production rather than consumerism, was typical for all of the draftees who formed the bulk of Thieu's military machine. The upper echelons of the Thieu government and military forces, however, went for a longer period of time. They studied hard, including history, politics, and economics, as well as worked hard, including raising their own food. Some reporters have noted a shortage of food at the camps—but there wasn't (and still isn't) an overabundance of food anywhere in VietNam. Those observers have also reported a shortage of Western medicines at the camps—but by the time I left VietNam there wasn't an overabundance of Western medicines anywhere in the country. Furthermore, during my entire stay after the end of the war, I heard no reports, allegations, or rumors of torture at these camps. People were returning from the camps and being reintegrated into society—including a Protestant doctor who worked at a new drug rehabilitation center on the outskirts of SaiGon.

Possible responses of Christians to the new government included a blind obedience to it, at one extreme, and a militant opposition to it, at the other. In SaiGon those numbered with either extreme were very, very few. As far as I know, the international press carried the story about the Vinh Son Catholic Church in SaiGon where guns, ammunition, radio broadcasting equipment, and a printing press turning out counterfeit money were discovered on February 13, 1976. Perhaps the "facts" will always be questionable—some of my Vietnamese Christian friends thought the affair might have been a fabrication—but at least Christians in VietNam felt that, as a result of the incident, the government was certainly going to crack down on all religious activities. But the suppression never came. The government, however, did warn Christians that they should not try to sabotage the government or misuse the freedom that was given them.

The vast majority of Vietnamese Christians, then, were grateful that the war was over, even though they still faced difficult decisions related to their involvement in the enormous task of rebuilding their precious homeland. For example, on students' days off, their idealism and enthusiasm were being channeled into constructive projects in the countryside, like digging canals and working alongside farmers, as well as projects in the city, like clean-up campaigns to help prevent epidemics. The sharing time on Sunday morning, April 4, 1976, began with a relatively young, but mature, close Christian friend of mine saying:

> My class has just been cited as the top class—the exemplary class—in the whole school. Praise the Lord! That came as quite a surprise because I'm class president but haven't even joined the Ho Chi Minh City Student Union. In fact, it seems like kids who are so interested in joining the Student Union are just interested in personal gain. When some of my school's leaders asked me about the role of religion in my life, I told them, "Listen, if I weren't a Christian and if I wouldn't understand that Jesus was interested in helping people, I myself just might not be so willing to volunteer for some of those work projects of yours."

A guest that morning, widely known in evangelical circles for her singing ability, quickly responded,

> But I won't volunteer for some simple stuff like cleaning the streets. Give me some big, worthwhile job, and I'll do it.

Then another close Christian friend of mine, who had been the first one in her university group of English majors to volunteer for a recent workday in the countryside, spoke up,

> But maybe you have to volunteer for some simple work,

too, so that you have a perspective from which to speak. For example, sweeping city sidewalks: I volunteered to help, but not many others did. Yet we were expected to sweep the whole precinct—starting while the people were still asleep. After we were done, I told the leadership straight out that it was ridiculous for us to have done all that: if each family would keep things clean in front of its own house, the problem would be solved.

Thanksgiving for Freedom

This year October 10 and November 24 mark the traditional national-religious Thanksgiving holidays for Canada and the U.S., respectively, when North American Christians are especially grateful for the freedom of religion which we enjoy here. In VietNam, too, Christians were—and are—grateful for the freedom that they still have and for their government's policy of tolerance toward religion. As far as we could tell, even though there has been a decentralization of power, bringing some lack of standardization and giving local officials substantial control, intolerance was the exception, not the rule. In fact, shortly before I left, a good friend of mine—a Vietnamese who received his doctorate in Bible and theology in the U.S. and who was directing Christian youth work in SaiGon besides teaching at the Evangelical Bible Institute at NhaTrang—shared these words with me in his articulate English:

> Jim, give people a true picture of the church in Vietnam as far as you know, and the freedom we still have in the country. Many are concerned and want to know the truth. They might not believe what we write from Saigon due to their suspicion that we are obliged to give them an optimistic picture! They will believe you more than what we write from Saigon.

What was the basis for his statement? Perhaps two final examples will be sufficient. First, 171 students—a very high enrollment—were finishing up the 1975-1976 school year at the NhaTrang Bible Institute, the leadership training center for the Evangelical Church in the South. (Since spring semester 1977, the Institute has not been operating, apparently pending the reunification of the Evangelical Church in the North and in the South. The country was already formally reunited in July 1976, so why not the Evangelical Church, too? Indeed, why couldn't the Evangelical Church have been the first to reunite and light the way to reconciliation for the rest of the country? But who are we to challenge them, when North America is still torn asunder by Christians with differing views on the war in VietNam?)

Second, not long after the end of the war, everyone in SaiGon, including foreigners, registered with the new government there, and on the registration forms was a place to indicate religious affiliation, if any. Government workers—civil servants—who had indicated that they were Christians were then able to take December 25, 1975, off from work as a Christmas holiday! Non-Christians—Buddhists, for example—and Christians who had been too timid to acknowledge that they were Christians had to work on December 25. It is especially amazing since Christians are a small minority in VietNam: Catholics comprise only about ten percent of the total population, and Protestants less than one percent.

Up Ahead

I didn't go to VietNam as a representative of the U.S. government, and I didn't come back from there as a representative of the new government in VietNam. I came as I went, i.e., as an ambassador of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:18-20). Perhaps it is understandable, therefore, why it means so much to me that my friends there are still my friends, regardless of what political system is in power. They promised to continue to pray for me and for Christians in America, and request that Christians here pray for them. It is not easy to be a Christian in VietNam, but, if we are really serious about it, maybe it is not so easy to be a Christian in North America either. Perhaps we shouldn't expect more from the indigenous Christians overseas then from the missionaries, and perhaps we shouldn't expect more from the missionaries than we expect from the sending congregations.

Near my home in central Kansas is the McConnell Air Force Base which has a huge sign close to one guarded entrance proclaiming, "Peace is Our Profession." Today, again, the fighter bombers were making practice runs overhead. In VietNam they were not practicing. When will we ever learn that war is not peace?

On my way home from VietNam in 1976, as the Boeing 747 commercial jet was taking off from Bangkok, the pilot announced, "We're at 15,000 feet now and will be climbing up to 33,000 feet. Then we'll be circumventing VietNam—staying about 30 miles off the coast." But peace is not merely the absence of war, and surely "circumventing VietNam" is not the Christian response either. The Incarnation means that Jesus was where the people were. He felt their uncertainty and their faith, their sorrow and their joy.

I believe that Christians do have good news and can light the way. For America. For VietNam. For the whole world. But only if our life and message is based on an integrity of word and deed, on a clear commitment to Christ and His Kingdom, on the centrality of His peace and reconciliation. Only one power can make people change: not guns or bombs or violence, but only the power of God's love (Zech. 4:6). If divine love can't, then nothing else can either. Because Jesus believed that He absorbed suffering rather than inflicting it. Jesus is still up ahead: calling us to faithfully follow Him, calling us to walk together in the shadow of the cross and in the light of the resurrection.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE FOR WORLD MISSION

Luke S. Martin

The Americans left Vietnam in 1975. With them went most of the Mennonite personnel who had served there. Last year a study was made of the twenty-year experience of the North American Mennonites in mission, service and peacemaking in Vietnam. This article is not a summary of the study report,[1] but deals with the implications of this experience for a North American Christian presence and witness in Asia and other parts of the world. It focuses primarily on the task of communicating the gospel message of Jesus Christ but also discusses service ministries.

The North American Mennonite effort in Vietnam was sponsored by the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (EMBMC), a regional mission board; and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the cooperative service agency of the Mennonite churches. MCC was involved in emergency relief, medical and developmental services since 1954. EMBMC went to Vietnam in 1957 and was involved in various evangelistic, church establishment and service ministries.

I will reflect on the personnel involved in the ministries; the mission and service objectives, strategies and programs; the relationships with governments; and dealing with societal problems and peacemaking. I also discuss the matter of administration. While more than 100 people contributed ideas to the evaluation study, I assume responsibility for the views expressed in this report.

Missionary and Service Personnel

The selection of expatriate missionary and service workers is important; it is these people more than programs who communicate to people in other cultures. Those who are able to work together harmoniously are more effective Christian witnesses than highly individualistic persons interested in "doing their own thing." Workers should have thorough preparation for responding biblically and theologically to new life settings. As communicators of the gospel in cross-cultural settings, they must become thoroughly familiar with the local culture and sociopolitical milieu. All foreign personnel, even short-term volunteers, need to become fluent in the local languages. Workers expected to carry out crucial ministries should arrive on "field" several months—sometimes a few years—in advance of specific assignment to allow for adequate language learning and cultural orientation.

Volunteers serving two- and three-year terms have made excellent contributions in teaching and service ministries. It must be recognized, however, that individuals with longer experience can usually make greater contributions.

Personnel should normally be recruited for specific ministries. Yet they need to be flexible to adapt to program changes.

Workers should develop primary relationships with local people rather than with fellow foreigners. Relationships with other expatriates help determine the identity of the expatriate community within the country. Close relationships with Americans identified with U.S. cultural and political concerns or with exploitative business corporations can compromise American missionaries and service workers in their identification as witnesses of the gospel of Christ and representatives of the church. This problem was particularly acute in Vietnam where nearly every American carried some marks of the U.S.A. This required that church representatives deliberately and clearly dissociate themselves from these American policies which were hurting the Vietnamese people.

The common people in Vietnam identified Catholic Christianity with France and evangelical Protestant Christianity with the United States. Since it is common in Asia to associate Christianity with the West, it is important to have an international team of missionaries to symbolize and express the transnational character of the gospel. A Christian presence and witness should not be viewed as an American presence. The MCC witness in Vietnam was significantly strengthened by the mixed team of Japanese, Indians, Canadians and Americans. In contrast, all the representatives of the Vietnam Mennonite Mission were Americans. With only American personnel, it was necessary for Mennonite missionaries to assume a stronger stance in rejecting official U.S. military policies. This had some positive values; but with a broad international team they could have maintained greater neutrality on political matters.

Beyond having an international team, it might be helpful to have an international administrative and support base. This suggests the need for new transnational mission models. The Asia Mennonite Mission Board is one attempt at international sponsorship for missionary service. Perhaps an easier way is for local churches with fairly common objectives in different countries to assign personnel and contribute funds to some shared cooperative ministry in another place. This becomes more feasible

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when they can work together with an already existing indigenous group.

The Vietnamese genuinely appreciated those foreign workers who lived simply and did not violate local cultural practices in living patterns and relationships. Personnel who have unconsciously accommodated themselves to the North American cultural scene in attitudes toward wealth, power, political and economic philosophy, and lifestyle—eating, living and dress habits, have more difficulty adapting to local cultural practices. To the degree that American Mennonites become assimilated into the dominant North American cultural patterns, it will become more difficult for them to associate with persons in other cultures in a sensitive way.

We must face squarely the North American Mennonite preoccupation with security. We give verbal assent to a theology of discipleship, but we are hesitant about taking personal risks for the sake of the gospel of Christ and service to others. Mission Board administrators can tell stories of families and friends overly concerned in crisis with the physical safety of persons serving in other lands. In a previous era the church's normal response in a crisis situation was for Christians to fall to their knees and commit the missionaries to the Lord. Today the normal response is to dial headquarters. The decision of several MCC men to stay in Vietnam during the revolutionary crisis of March and April 1975, had significant risks. But this became a beautiful testimony to the gospel of Christ; they gave a significant witness for some time and were supportive to local Christians in a revolutionary situation. We need to prepare volunteers, their families, and the church to more radically give up the prerogatives we so easily claim for ourselves.

MCC has tried to hold to the same standards in selecting service workers as those used for missionary personnel. Personal commitment to Jesus' way of love and peace (rather than mere humanitarianism) should be considered prerequisite for all workers. The basic motivation for service must spring from Christian commitment and find expression in life shared with other members of a local Christian community.

All field personnel should be involved in defining objectives. These objectives include both general and specific, long-range and short-term. Programs must be periodically evaluated and objectives redefined. Mature leadership is needed on field locations. Maximum local decision-making is important, especially in unstable situations. In certain areas where communication is difficult or crisis is endemic, there would be value in assigning well-trained and disciplined service teams with maximum administrative freedom.

Periodic visits by home office administrators are important.

In a situation as ambiguous as Vietnam, it is essential to assign someone not administratively involved to evaluate and analyze critically what is happening, and to suggest options, alternatives and implications. This person can be helpful both to home office administrators and to personnel on field locations to see that priority tasks are worked at.

Mission Objectives, Strategies and Programs

Mission-Church Relationships. In Vietnam Mennonite missionaries tried to follow a plan of partnership with the local church. They understood this to mean preaching the gospel, teaching and baptizing those who believed and accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, and setting up joint structures between the mission and church so that local Christians could gain experience with missionaries in a local church. As the church developed and matured, missionaries helped local Christians to assume increasing responsibility in the church and eventually the mission structure would fade away. Missionaries who stay on then would become subject to the local church. This process was followed, and Vietnamese Christians assumed full responsibility for overall leadership in the early 1970s.

This concept of partnership has good points, for it enables believers to become familiar with and help carry out certain activities of the church under missionary tutelage. But this kind of partnership has its limitations, too. It introduces foreign patterns of church life which might not be particularly appropriate and tends to create a dependency which can cripple the normal growth of the church.

It is important that the local church retain full autonomy in leadership and decision-making at all stages in its development. This is crucial in a revolutionary and nationalistic society where the missionaries might not be around long, but it might apply in most other areas as well. Missionaries are carrying out an apostolic ministry. They are the ones "sent" by the church and the Holy Spirit. Missionaries and the local church both need the freedom under the Spirit to take initiatives without being dependent on or dominated by the other. Missionary vision must not be suppressed by local Christians concerned with preserving their own prerogatives or fearful of moving into new areas of witness. It is also unfair to local Christians to expect them to determine the activities of foreign missionaries.

I am not arguing, however, for a complete dichotomy between mission and local church. Missionaries must be true servants of the local church and accept the counsel and discipline of the church where they are serving. One important ministry which missionaries must fulfill is in helping to teach the local church to understand the demands of the gospel. This will involve both formal and informal teaching experiences. An intimate, informal (Paul-Timothy) relationship frees both the missionaries and the local church leaders for a more faithful and fruitful ministry than where there are joint administrative relationships.

It might be helpful to note the different mission-church

relationship models used by mission agencies in Vietnam. Mennonite missionaries, by 1969, relinquished most responsibilities in the local congregation in Saigon although they continued to participate in the life of the congregation. But missionaries and local Vietnamese leaders worked together in developing a total Mennonite mission strategy in Vietnam. When missionaries in 1973-74 asked that the local church assume greater leadership in this, some of the local church leaders felt that the missionaries were seeking to abdicate their responsibilities to the church.

The Vietnam Baptist Mission was founded by the Southern Baptist Convention in only 1959. The Baptists established congregations in many areas. In some congregations missionaries exercised pastoral leadership. In others the new believers had greater responsibility while missionaries aided in a teaching ministry. Congregations led by local leadership had the most promise of developing into strong congregations.

The Evangelical Church of Vietnam (ECVN), the largest evangelical church in Vietnam, was established as an independent body in the late 1920s nearly 20 years after missionary work was begun by the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). C&MA continued as a separate and parallel organization and was able to carry out many of its objectives and concerns fairly effectively. In crucial areas such as leadership training, relations with other churches, and large-scale evangelistic programs, C&MA continued to exercise much influence on the ECVN. All local congregations and the executive committee of the ECVN were completely in the hands of Vietnamese. While recognizing significant philosophical differences between the Mennonite and the C&MA missions, I recognize the fundamental strengths in the C&MA strategy of mission-church relationships.

A mission structure should always be only an enabling organization to help establish and strengthen the church in a given area. We must recognize that missionary organizations must work with the givens in each local situation. The mission agency and the local church can be mutually supportive in the Christian witness. In Vietnam, for example, the government was more apprehensive about recognizing a new Vietnamese religious group than a foreign one which already operated in an acceptable way in another place. Thus the mission secured recognition which enabled the church to secure the property it wanted. The agency might continue as long as the local church welcomes it or as long as the sending church requests it. It should not assume that the mission structure fades away and that the missionaries will be absorbed into the local church.

Establishing a Church. One issue that Mennonite missionaries faced that never was answered with finality was the question: Do we work to strengthen the existing church (ECVN) or do we seek to establish a Mennonite church? Missionaries who taught English to Vietnamese students would generally receive a "yes" or a "no" response to an "either-or" question. So the answer to this question is "yes." Mennonite missionaries might have spent more time in teaching ministries with the ECVN (ECVN pastors frequently served the Mennonite congregation; Mennonite missionaries were sometimes invited to share at ECVN gatherings). Yet establishing new fellowships broadened the total church in Vietnam and expressed new visible church models which were instructive for the ECVN.

A practical question faced by missionaries working in a new setting is, "What are the basic criteria for determining the validity of a believer's commitment to Jesus Christ?" Some missionaries accept the basic affirmation of the new Christian, "Jesus is my Lord." Others insist on some specific response to certain life situations. It is difficult to make such judgments in a cross-cultural situation. I suggest that local Christians do the baptizing, the pastoring and the disciplining—not the missionaries. If the missionaries are part of the local church's structure, they will need to "accept" behavior among church members that they otherwise might not accept, like members going into the armed forces. If they are not a part of the church's organization, they can accept local Christians as brothers and sisters in the Lord while continuing a discerning and prophetic teaching ministry. One cannot rule out a mature church requesting a missionary to serve as pastor of a congregation or to serve in some other leadership role in the church for a period of time; this could actually express and affirm the international character of the church. When people from different nationalities and different citizenships work together as members of a congregation, one receives a foretaste of the glorified church. But this is not the norm now. There will be groups of local Christians who share a common way of life who become the church of Jesus Christ in that place. No other community tolerates foreigners serving as their leaders. It is likewise inappropriate in a church for foreign missionaries to serve as congregational or church leaders.

Evangelistic Witness. Evangelistic strategy must reflect the local situations. Mennonite missionaries in Vietnam have sometimes been criticized for giving an extremely low-key evangelistic gospel witness. It is assumed that in a place like Somalia where any verbal Christian witness is forbidden, one has to choose this approach. In Vietnam, by contrast, one had many opportunities and great freedom to preach the gospel. Yet to preach the gospel of Christ's love and peace relevant to the situation meant potential conflict with the political ideology. At this point missionaries were more hesitant than they needed to have been.

However, another political factor had to be considered. In the early years of the Mennonite mission, the missionaries took a more aggressive approach. But as Vietnam became more politicized and the government propaganda barrage increased along with the war, the

missionaries became less aggressive in preaching. When American policies and programs aggressively concentrated on "winning the hearts and minds" (WHAM!) of the Vietnamese, the missionaries did not want the gospel to be confused with American propaganda. McLuhan's dictum, "the medium is the message," had meaning in Vietnam. Missionaries tried to be a Christian presence, interpreting the gospel verbally to the hundreds with whom they associated, without using pressure.

Guiding the Church. Another important area in missionary work is the shape of the church and its leadership pattern. Flexibility is called for since societal patterns may offer clues concerning structures. It is difficult to predict what future political structures will exist and what church structures will best enable the church to function in that society. The highest priority, however, is for the "equipping of all the saints for the work of ministry." Bible teaching and leadership training is of the highest priority.

Concern has been expressed about whether the missionaries did all they could to help prepare the Vietnamese church to live under a radically different political system. The Catholic church in Vietnam had various experiences in relation to the state—periods of persecution and toleration, and briefly achieving much influence in political affairs from 1954-1963. The ECVN has generally seen itself existing alongside the state, showing little interest in the government and, giving no official support to the state. Individual members of the church could involve themselves in the affairs of state, and members were encouraged to fulfill the "duties of a citizen," usually defined by the state. Members of the Mennonite church in Vietnam frequently accepted the same stance. Others refused military service, sometimes due to Christian convictions and sometimes out of self-interest. The Mennonite historical experience and understanding of biblical theology places the church over against the state. The church does its divinely-appointed tasks while government is responsible for maintaining law and order in an ungodly society. The Christian's relationship to government is basically passive, giving only what the state asks for, provided this does not violate the Christian's higher loyalty to God.

North American Mennonites should more actively affirm the good policies and contributions of government. There are certain demonic forces inherent in the state power which Christians must reject. But we can take the main concerns and ideas of a state—left, center, or right—like freedom, independence, the pursuit of happiness, work, production, reconciliation, the "new man" and help the church to reinterpret and affirm them within a Christian theological context. For example, while the Marxists stress increasing production for meeting state goals, Christians can affirm the positive value of work in service to others. In this way the perhaps idolatrous ideological concerns of the state can be reinterpreted and accepted within the Christian community. Marxists would not support this exercise. Yet it can help Christians to be salt and light in the world and not to confront the state on the wrong issues. The church in Vietnam studied some church history, but missionaries might have given Christians more help in understanding theologically the implications of living in different kinds of societies.

Another area where missionaries were weak was in failing to prepare, publish and distribute Christian literature which would have helped the church to see how the Christian community can live within the world. This would have supplemented the literature produced by the Evangelical Church or the C&MA. Clear interpretations of the Christian way of love, peace, reconciliation and service would have been helpful to the Mennonite community as well as to Christians of other churches. And these materials could continue to be helpful today when association with the international Christian church is more limited. Missionaries were convinced of the need for literature, staff were assigned to work at this and funds were available. But literature was never made top priority; missionaries were too busy doing other things.

The production of literature must be given much more priority wherever the church is engaged in mission. Many books have cultural biases which make them unacceptable for direct translations. Books such as John Driver's *Community and Commitment* (Herald Press, 1976) are suitable for translation into other languages. It is essential, however, that local churches produce their own materials.

One particular missionary temptation is to become so involved in "doing good" that they do not have sufficient time for the most important ministries. Service ministries to the poor and to refugees were important in Vietnam to give integrity to the gospel and were opportunites for an evangelistic witness. Yet missionaries involved in such programs were able to give less time to crucial tasks of Bible teaching. Using local people for service ministries is a helpful solution if they are committed to the same understanding of Christian service. When they do not understand or support this philosophy, their leadership of the programs creates problems.

Local staff help to create the positive and negative images people have toward the mission or service agency. Local staff relations with foreigners also affects the way they are viewed and can sometimes make them vulnerable to criticism in the community.

Training personnel for service programs or church support ministries is important. Competent staff are needed to do jobs effectively. Many of our Christian concerns and motivation can be communicated through daily association with colleagues.

The presence of the Christian church is a gracious reality in many countries. Mennonites in Vietnam were able to fellowship with those who had come to experience Christ through other churches and missions. Yet in areas

where we Mennonites perceive the church to be not fully faithful to the scriptural revelation, the presence of these other church models complicates the missionary task. The biblical model of the one church means that we must accept and identify with other Christians. On the other hand, individuals who newly accept faith in Christ tend to uncritically accept those models. This requires that we share our understanding of the gospel with other Christians as well as learn from them. Above all, it requires that missionaries themselves demonstrate in their lives the gospel to which they are committed. And it is not easy for affluent North American Mennonites to demonstrate a simple and sacrificial and confident faith in God.

Service Objectives, Strategies and Programs

MCC service administrators, like mission leaders, must be thoroughly familiar with the historical, political, economic, religious and cultural situation of the area being considered. A decision to enter any country or area must be expressed in clear objectives to be attained within a stated period and include a plan for evaluation.

Working with a local organization is normally the most significant way of serving in a given area. This will frequently be a Christian church or other Christian organization with which we have much in common. Relationships with other organizations and people help create the agency's image. Mennonites both benefit from and can be handicapped by identification with these groups. Our association with other groups changes their image and patterns as well.

The services of an agency like MCC can strengthen local organizations and encourage the formation of needed structures. Helping other groups can cause them to develop patterns of dependency and contribute to a recipient mentality which must be avoided. This is more likely to happen when working with a local Christian church where we have much in common and because of the biblical injunction to help those "of the household of faith."

When a service agency works with an indigenous organization and plans to expand its ministries within that country into new geographic or functional areas, programs should be developed with other groups rather than continue only with the one organization. This will help to avoid being locked in with one organization. By working with only one organization, MCC comes to be seen as its own. Other local people who also wish to work with MCC see MCC as being co-opted by that organization. MCC's witness is expanded when MCC is able to work with other organizations.

Service workers may deeply appreciate a close relationship with Christians in a particular organization, but this can turn sour if they are limited only to those relationships. Volunteers working in a new and frustrating cultural environment may have more appreciation for local Christians when they are also able to work closely with other persons as well. MCC relationships with non-Christians or other Christian groups can also enable local Christians to see new possibilities for witness.

Although emergency relief programs are needed, a service agency needs to define objectives and develop programs which will attempt to deal with root problems in a society rather than just treat symptoms. Programs to be developed should have the potential for relating to various groups of people—sick, poor, farmers, rural, urban. Concern must be expressed for the oppressed—minority groups, drug addicts, conscientious objectors to war who are imprisoned, etc.

Programs should be designed to meet local needs rather than the agency's own needs (as, for example, MCC child sponsorship programs). In developmental and assistance programs, the agency should supplement local resources rather than provide the primary input. When objectives call for helping to develop indigenously based programs, a clear strategy for implementing a phased transition to local autonomy must be developed.

MCC sometimes can advantageously cooperate with other international agencies in working toward common objectives within a given area, as experience with Vietnam Christian Service (VNCS) is shown. This must be weighed against the limitations cooperation imposes. MCC should not limit its services to what can be done within a cooperative venture but ought continue some of its own programs in addition.

Attitude toward Societal Problems, Peacemaking

When missionaries are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and are relating to people who are suffering, they must also be concerned about ministering to those needs. This frequently calls for some kind of service ministry, but may also involve serving as advocates for the voiceless and powerless. There is a moral authority inherent in Christian witness. In countries with pervasive American cultural, economic or military influence, American missionaries and service workers sometimes have a kind of "Roman citizenship" which implies significant responsibility and enables them to have considerable influence in expressing concern for suffering people. This was true in South Vietnam and is likely true in many Latin American countries today. A Christian witness there does not mean that personnel will attack the local governments or advocate revolution. But they will be concerned that others are able to live as humans. Some Christian workers should be willing to run the risk of being expelled from a country for a faithful witness; this is preferable to leaving voluntarily as a public protest.

Expatriate personnel must clearly articulate their commitment to the gospel so that local people can understand it and then they must live consistently with that commitment. When the missionaries are not involved in the local church organization, they can take positions on

issues such as noninvolvement in military services which the church may not be ready to take. It is inappropriate for the missionaries to deliberately involve the local church in some issue when it is not prepared to take the consequences for a particular position.

Mennonites in Vietnam were concerned about preaching the gospel and ministering to physical need. It took a long time before they understood that the good news of the gospel included working actively to end the war. There should have been a clearer peacemaking strategy. The Mennonite churches need a multifaceted witness to confront such a monstrous evil. The peace position which we understand must be adequately interpreted within a biblical and theological framework. Even though MCC personnel and missionaries had close relationships with ECVN Christians and leaders, our biblical peace position was not widely accepted or even understood by them.

We need to develop better peacemaking models. The visits of historians, theologians, missiologists, and other church leaders to Vietnam was helpful in assisting expatriate personnel to work at some of the issues. The MCC Peace Section gave crucial leadership to the peace witness in Vietnam and in North America. Peace Section might have assigned someone to work with the personnel in Vietnam for a longer period of time.

The presence of both the EMBMC and MCC in Vietnam involved some administrative and service overlap, but the two were able to do some things—separately and together—that neither could have done alone. Their relationships to the government were different. Each organization had strengths, but also practical limitations.

A Christian witness in an area of conflict is important, not only for the service to the victims, but to keep North American Mennonites involved in helping others and to interpret the conflict to North Americans. We have the responsibility to help interpret the problems of other countries to the people and governments of North America if they are in any way responsible for the problems or have the resources for improving the situation. We then must work for change.

Much of the Christian witness for peace during the Vietnam war era in North America was given by ad hoc groups. The Mennonite churches in North America cannot expect MCC or the mission boards to do or say all that they want done or said on a given matter or issue. We must recognize also the crucial matter of timing in dealing with a live issue in the church or in society. Mennonites might have done more to emphasize the biblical basis of our peace concerns, especially among Evangelicals, when the national mood was focused on the issues of war and peace.

Relationships to Political Orders

Relationships with governments at the local and higher levels are frequently helpful. The emphasis must be on relating to the officials as human beings. The missionaries and service workers can share God's concern for the well-being of all people, both with suffering people and with government officials. Close relationships with officials can compromise the gospel message, however. Personnel who request services of the government may obligate themselves to the government. MCC should not normally give its resources directly through a governmental agency. We must recognize that our services and presence in a country frequently help build a positive image for the government among the people, even though we do not intend this. For example, in 1954 South Vietnam welcomed MCC's entry to demonstrate foreign support for their government; Hanoi likewise welcomed MCC support. Our contributed services sometimes permit governments to divert their resources to other less noble purposes. We should not ignore or suppress information on social injustices in order to maintain the good graces of any government. It is helpful to develop clear guidelines about relating to governments and military organizations within the countries of service.

When working in a conflict situation, the church can be a reconciling force. It should seek to communicate with all parties. Normally all parties should be informed of the nature of association with the others. For instance, MCC might have informed the government of South Vietnam of assistance to areas controlled by the National Liberation Front. The Mennonite decision and attempt to work with both sides in Vietnam was rewarding. Yet we still have much to learn about ways of carrying out Christian witness and service ministries with integrity where involvement by our personnel is restricted.

MCC should minimize relationships with the U.S. and Canadian governments. When support is needed for developmental programs, MCC should seek help from local governments or international agencies. North American Mennonite agencies should not accept funding from developmental agencies of their governments such as USAID or CIDA since it can easily compromise their identities. Some Mennonites might be encouraged to work directly for developmental programs of their own governments. Or they might work with indigenous organizations in other countries that have negotiated developmental assistance from North American governmental organizations.

If a Mennonite agency cooperates with a council of voluntary agencies in a country, care must be taken that it represents the legitimate local concerns rather than outside political interests.

In our complex world with many oppressive governments and systems, the mission or service agency is often tempted to support or approve an oppressive political or economic system which permits a continued missionary and service presence in the belief that a change would likely result in the installation of a more repressive system. In the case of Vietnam, it would have meant advocating continued fighting as a better alternative than having a Marxist government. This view represents little

faith in God's sovereignty in the world. We are called to give a faithful witness for Jesus Christ today and trust the tomorrow to God.

1. For a complete report of the Vietnam Study Project, see "An Evaluation of Mennonite Mission, Service and Peacemaking in Vietnam, 1954-1976."

Editorial Comment

MISSIONS AND POLITICS

From the first days of the movement, Christian witnesses have faced the "political" question. The Apostles were under no illusion. The political and religious leaders described them as the people who were turning "the world upside down," the revolutionaries. This state of affairs did not change appreciably until Constantine coopted the church in the fourth century to be a part of the establishment.

The emergence of the Christian missionary movement in modern times has reopened the question of the political meaning of the Christian church. For a long time, however, it was more implicit than explicit. During the past generation, under the impact of Marxist social analysis and various new theologies—secular, black, African, Asian, liberation—the relationship between the gospel and politics has become a dominant theme. Scholars have examined Jesus to see whether he was a Zealot and a self-confessed political leader. Did his messiahship not have political purpose? Following Moltmann's lead, a number of books were devoted to the theme of the role of eschatology in political change.

But scholars were only catching up with what had been developing for a long time. The political significance of the church has reappeared first of all because the church has spread during the past two hundred years throughout the world. If the Constantinian compromise is disintegrating, it is not because theologians finally named it for what it was. Rather the church recovered enough of its birthright as a messianic movement to become missionary once again. Even though a deformed gospel has often been presented—especially its eschatological dynamic has been missing—it pointed to Jesus Christ. In Him was the promise to "make all things new," He who was and is God-with-us. The most revolutionary confession the church has ever made or can make is: "Jesus Christ is Lord!"

We still do not have an adequate understanding of "politics and missions" as they evolved during The Great Century, to use Kenneth Scott Latourette's phrase. Most scholarship has served us poorly. Missionary insiders have frequently interpreted their work in entirely spiritual and institutional terms. At the other extreme scholars have typically treated the missionary-government relationship too simplistically. They portray the missionary as a servile accomplice of the colonial powers in their territorial expansion throughout the 19th century. Fortunately, some fresh studies are appearing which give a more balanced and accurate picture of what was frequently a troubled, unstable relationship.

One of the few policy statements defining the relationship between the missionary and politics in the 19th century was written by missionary statesman Henry Venn in 1860. As an Anglican Evangelical, Venn was thoroughly committed to the Established Church. He took the position that as a member of the Established Church, he was free, indeed under obligation, to exert influence on government to adopt policies and enact laws that furthered the Christian cause. As general secretary of the largest Anglican missionary society, he spent considerable time and energy lobbying with members of parliament and cabinet ministers to get decisions favorable to Christian missions. Traders, adventurers, slavers and commercial companies were his real opponents. In September 1860 Venn handed instructions to outgoing missionaries concerning "Missions and Politics." This statement subsequently became the official policy for the Church Missionary Society. The gist of Venn's policy was that the Christian gospel brought about change. Inward transformation in the individual led to social improvement. The gospel introduces the convert to "the true principles of justice and humanity: and so to quicken in their minds the sense of the wrongs they may suffer through oppression and misgovernment. A knowledge also of Christian duty, while it secures obedience to the sovereign powers, limits that obedience to things lawful in the sight of God as defined in His word. . ." Although the missionary is primarily a minister of the gospel, that ministry inevitably has social and political consequences. In the face of injustice, the missionary had no choice but to cry out against it, whatever the cost. And the Society would support the missionary in his witness. Venn counseled his missionaries to avoid acting in a "political spirit" even though involved in a political issue, but they were not to hesitate to witness to governments when "the great principles of justice, humanity, and Christian duty" were at stake. Venn's statement was not written in a vacuum. His missionaries in Yorubaland were faced with imminent war; the slave trade was not yet ended in Africa and the great Indian Mutiny of 1857 had left many Britishers badly shaken. Thus Venn understood thoroughly the nature, the possibilities and the limits of political action. He focused

the missionary's attention on what Christian responsibility meant in the face of such a complex and ambiguous relationship.

Today's missionary confronts what may be an even more complicated and unstable world. In terms of formal relationships, the missionary must reckon with at least six groups. These include: sending church; home government, which usually has a diplomatic mission in the host country; receiving church; host government; missionary colleagues; and expatriate community, including various voluntary agencies. No missionary is an island. To take a position on an issue of the day, the missionary immediately sets off repercussions for most, if not all, of the groups to which he relates. One solution is to refuse to be drawn into debate at all. Another approach is to pretend the individual has no obligation to colleagues or other groups but to take positions on a personal basis. Both approaches are irresponsible.

Mission and Kingdom

The missionary proclaims the message of the kingdom. but how does the kingdom of God relate to the kingdoms of this world where the missionary is concerned? We can summarize several positions.

One position holds that the kingdom of God is entirely future. We preach the gospel now to win individuals to faith in a kingdom that will come in a great cataclysm at the end of history. The present world is hopeless and the Christian cannot waste time on political programs. The supreme task of the church is to preach the gospel and avoid politics. This position is based on a view of prophecy which emerged in the 19th century and which came to dominate conservative evangelical thinking. This led to the assertion that the missionary is apolitical so long as he sticks by proclamation of the gospel.

A second position sees the church bringing the fruits of the kingdom of God to bear on the larger society through a partnership between church and state and other social institutions. The church may need to assist in clarifying the respective roles of church and state in society, but we can assume that such a relationship is divinely ordered. This classical Western understanding of church and state begs many questions when transposed to a society where the church is one-half of one percent of the population and the government is based on entirely different religious and cultural foundations.

Another viewpoint calls the church to support the secular order by allowing the "world to set the agenda for the church." The church is subservient. Indeed, the church's calling is to be servant to the world.

According to the fourth type, the kingdom of God is eschatological and is being introduced into history as a messianic movement led by Jesus Christ. The missionary is in the vanguard of that movement. The messianic kingdom presents an alternative to the present world order. The church does not seek to impose this new order on the larger society but rather models the "newness" of the messianic kingdom in its common life. The world correctly perceives this as a judgment on itself and may even find the presence of the church intolerable. The messianic kingdom was inaugurated in the first coming of Jesus Christ and will be consummated at his second coming.

Each of these views leads to its own set of policies with regard to "missions and politics."

Some Emerging Lessons

Events during the past generation, beginning with the closing of China and including Vietnam, point to some lessons we must learn about the relationship between the missionary and the political order. We can offer here no more than an outline.

(1) The myth that the missionary is politically neutral must be dispelled. The host government and revolutionary groups throughout the Third World know better. Until now nearly all missionaries have come from politically powerful and affluent countries and are assumed to be accessories to the political and economic designs of the Western powers. This is doubly true when a French missionary is present in Algeria or an American worker is present in Vietnam during the revolution. From the standpoint of the Algerian or Vietnamese, to be "neutral" in the midst of war is immoral and incredible. The myth has been further compounded by missionary insistence on neutrality while also urging submission to the governing power (Romans 13). In other words, the professed neutrality increasingly looked like tacit alliance with the government in power.

(2) The political context is important to missions. Missionaries value security. A government which insures social and political tranquillity becomes an ally. Without government goodwill a mission cannot continue to work. But does the missionary barter his witness against injustice for personal security?

(3) In the midst of conflict, it is advisable to follow a course of positive neutrality. By this is meant, the Christian worker and agency must deliberately cultivate contacts with both sides and promote reconciliation.

(4) The missionary should always be actively pro-justice. This may be personally costly when the oppressor is also the ruling power but the integrity of the gospel the missionary proclaims depends on precisely this witness.

(5) If the missionary has difficulty in coming to terms with politics, so does the local church. The missionary exerts influence in this area whether he is conscious of it or not.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

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FOR MISSION LEADERS

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Contents

The Missionary as a Marginal Person, Roger C. Sider, M.D.
Paul and Mission, John Driver

THE MISSIONARY AS A MARGINAL PERSON

Roger C. Sider, M.D.

I wish to explore the idea of the missionary as a marginal person—a person who in many ways does not fit anywhere, who lives at the boundary of cultural life, and who finds that in a sense no matter where he is, he is not quite at home. In some ways none of us is ever fully assimilated to the culture to which we go to minister. Yet, after a while we do not quite fit our native culture either because we've been changed and influenced by our experiences. We need to explore the issue of life on the margin, both to look at some of its vulnerabilities and also at some of its dynamics and advantages. To do that we need to review briefly something that all of us have had in introductory sociology, the acculturation process.

The Acculturation Process

Acculturation is, of course, the process each of us undergoes as children by which we are made part and parcel of our particular society. What does it mean, for example, to grow up in North America and be acculturated here? If one compares the college student in India with the college student in Canada, one observes some striking contrasts. Cultural background produces important differences. It is highly variable in contrast to biological development. There is not a great deal of variation in our bodies whether we grow up in India, Africa, Japan, or the West. We may have slight pigmentary differences in our skin, may weigh a bit more or less, and our physical features may take on some superficially different characteristics. But, biologically, the process of growth and development is really strikingly uniform, granted that people have good conditions under which to grow.

Culturally, however, there is wide variation. Some things are learned differently in different cultures. For example, culture shapes our feelings toward authoritarianism. We learn to accept a particular stance towards authority; we learn to be competitive; we learn that it is important to strive to get ahead. We also learn attitudes and practices regarding personal hygiene and punctuality. We learn what kinds of family loyalty matter and what kinds do not. We learn, in our culture particularly, that the nuclear family, the parents and their biological offspring, are where the vast emphasis is placed in terms of family loyalties. The extended family is not nearly so important here as it is in many other cultures. We are learning all these things as we are growing up.

We even learn quite trivial things. We learn what size a Sunday morning bulletin is. We had a minor case of culture shock in moving from Baltimore to Rochester. For several Sundays we were visiting different churches. I was impressed one Sunday with the odd shape of the bulletin. It was long and narrow—about foolscap length and quite narrow. It just was not right! That illustrates another important point about acculturation. We not only learn a way of doing things, a way of thinking; we also learn that it is the right way. Bulletins are a certain size, sermons ought to be so long, ministers dress in a particular style

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when in the pulpit. All of these things take on a certain prescriptive value so that by the time we are teenagers we are highly acculturated. We have come to believe a great number of things about the world which are not necessarily true; but we believe them and ascribe superior value to them. That is, our way of doing things is the right way. What is merely a system of cultural conventions thus comes to be seen as possessing intrinsic correctness. Moreover, this uncritical acceptance of our own cultural conventions takes place at the deepest psychological level. The crucial aspect of the acculturation process is not what is learned, but rather how it is learned—automatically, unconsciously, uncritically.

What follows, then, is that once we have established for ourselves a cultural identity, everyone else who is different is treated as such. Anyone who has not been acculturated in this way is seen as a foreigner, a stranger, an oddball. This leads, of course, to prejudice, which is a way of protecting our cultural identity and maintaining the superiority of the way we were brought up. It is not a matter, in most cases, of malevolent motives. Looking down on other cultures, other ways of thinking or other sizes of Sunday bulletins does not come from ill motives. Such prejudice is based, rather, on deep-seated psychological reasons. We need to retain some identity with our culture and some sense that our way is the right way.

Let us examine briefly some of the psychological payoffs of being a member of a culture. One payoff is having an identity. Identity is that global concept representing who I am in terms of my self-perception and my perceptions of others. It has many parts—among them national, professional, racial, ethnic, physical, and religious aspects. All of these parts of our identity are integrated in a cultural context so that who we are is quite literally a product of acculturation. Being part of a culture is knowing who we are and where we belong.

A corollary of that is that it provides us with a great deal of security. It is nice to know what to expect. It is good for me to know that when I come to a meeting people will sit around and listen politely whether they are interested or not. That allows me to go ahead with my plans and know what is expected of me. It is very nice to know when you go to a store just exactly what is expected of you in terms of what to say and how to behave. It is nice to know how you should dress on various occasions. All of these conventions help maintain a culture. Having a culture that one belongs to is a great efficiency. It is much less exhausting than attempting to work one's way through the same small tasks when he is not at home in a culture. And it is reassuring. In our home culture we feel relatively secure in the conduct of social relations.

A third advantage has to do with the way in which our participation in our culture regulates how we evaluate ourselves—regulates our self-esteem. Most people who have not had the experience of living in another culture would be surprised to know how vulnerable one's self-esteem can become when one is away from those sources of support that we tend to take for granted in the culture to which we belong. Those persons whom we identify as people who support us, who care about us, who say nice things about us from time to time, knowing where we belong, that we matter—those things are enormously important in buoying us up and in keeping our self-confidence at a level where we can function. And, of course, if that is taken away, we become vulnerable because we do not have the kinds of emotional support that we took for granted.

Let me illustrate this with something trivial which I observed when we first got to Phumula in 1967. I discovered that a letter from my mother was extremely important even though I rarely wrote to my mother when I was at home. At home it was sufficient in terms of my identity, security, and self-esteem to telephone or visit her occasionally, but as soon as I got away from the sources of support that I was used to, a letter from my mother became very important. When the mailbag arrived, my first priority was to sort through it for her letter.

Another example shows how one's sense of identity can get confused quickly. During those first days in the hospital in Phumula, I was called out with the ambulance. One of the most important questions in my mind was, "Should I wear my white coat or not?" In retrospect, this was absolutely ludicrous, but I was not feeling much like a doctor in that situation and I was not at all sure that other people were thinking that I was a doctor. I needed some visible, tangible evidence that I was the right one. I had been secure in my role as a physician in North America because I had cultural supports. In Phumula I suddenly was not at all secure. In summary, our culture provides identity, security, and self-esteem.

The Move to the Margin

What happens when we move to the margin? What does being a missionary involve in terms of our cultural experience? It involves, in a major sense, giving up all the benefits of acculturation. We manage to retain memories. We think a great deal of what it was like back home. And when we are really feeling badly we dredge up fantasies of what we could be doing: "This evening, if we were in Mount Joy, we'd . . ." In reality, however, we leave virtually all that behind, with the exception of some slender threads. When we move to another culture, to the margin, to the farthest outpost of our culture, the reality of culture shock really hits us; and I do not think there is any way to explain that experience to those who have not had it. When you talk about it, it is much too abstract, too unreal, too vague. But when you find yourself in a world that is utterly strange in so many ways and find

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that—along with the strangeness—you do not know the cues, every situation is new, and you do not have the advantage of habitual ways of behaving, you become exhausted. You find that every little task is an enormously burdensome one—even buying a tube of toothpaste. You have always bought Crest and there is no Crest. What do you do? There may not even be any toothpaste that week. The fact that we are creatures of habit and routine, that we are social creatures above and beyond everything else, means that when we are wrenched away from our social nest and moved to the margin we become highly vulnerable people.

Vulnerability at the Margin

My third point deals with the vulnerabilities of people placed on the margin. Who are we depends on who other people say we are. Most of us do not realize how much we depend on other people's constant validation of us to maintain our knowledge of who we are. If that disappears, we quickly begin to wonder who we are.

Let us take the issue of missionary identity. Think back to your first understanding of what it meant to be a missionary.

Certain images and assumptions come to mind: 1) a dedicated, spiritual person; 2) one who had a high status in the life of the church; 3) a person to whom other people looked with a great deal of respect. It was that of a person engaged in public speaking, showing interesting pictures, reporting on a life of sacrifice, adventure, and faith. This was the makeup of a missionary identity to many North Americans.

When you went overseas, the people to whom you were ministering saw you, the missionary, as someone very different from what you at home thought a missionary to be.

There a missionary may be viewed as a wealthy person, or as a member of an influential minority, highly visible, and somewhat inscrutable. The missionary is an "American" with nationalistic connotations not understood here. You stop and say to yourself, "Well, that's not me. I'm the same person. I'm the missionary when I'm home, I'm the missionary when I'm here. Yet people here see me differently. Who am I? Am I what the people at home think I am? Or, am I neither? Or, do I have to be both? Do I have to start playing roles so that when I am home I do the things that people expect missionaries to do and over here do the things people expect of missionaries in this setting?" We suddenly are faced with the fact that who we are really is defined by social context. We find it hard not to adapt and not to adjust to what other people expect us to be.

On the issue of security, the move to the margin is a move away from psychological safety and familiarity toward vulnerability, exposure, and danger—in most cases psychological rather than physical. How is this so? Security results from being in touch with the surrounding culture, perceiving cues, understanding communications, and responding appropriately. In a foreign culture correct perception is highly problematic. Thus we are never sure whether we appear as we intend to appear or whether we have observed or violated a cultural taboo. Every word, every act, every assumption in such a setting is risky. We cannot help but be gripped by the enormity of our insecurity.

There is also vulnerability in terms of our self-esteem. We have learned over the years how to protect our self-esteem, how to feel good about ourselves. But in another culture the very things that made us feel good about ourselves may backfire. For example, a remark such as "May I help you?" may connote condescension to an African rather than helpfulness. When we find that something we said reflects a condescending attitude, it reflects back on our sense of self-esteem. "Am I really that thoughtless and insensitive? Am I really missing all of this?" And so we can quickly begin to have doubts and questions that lead to feelings of inferiority.

Perhaps the most critical vulnerability is the vulnerability to cultural influence. When we move away from our culture, the process of getting close to another culture means that we are vulnerable to being influenced by that culture. Sometimes our anxieties come out more in terms of our children than in terms of ourselves. We assume we have established who we are: American expatriates, or American missionaries, or whatever. But we see our children having a different experience. They are not growing up in a pure culture, i.e., the American way of life. They are growing up at the margin and experience the influences of the culture in which they live rather than what we parents try to provide. We must face the vulnerability of not only ourselves becoming Indian, Japanese, Zambian, or whatever, but also of our children becoming "nationalized" too. We have to be willing to deal with that.

Maladaptation at the Margin

In view of this experience and these vulnerabilities, what are wrong patterns of adaptation? We can discern among all groups who have been transplanted from one culture to another three kinds of maladaptations. The first one is, "Let's make everybody else like us." This is in social/psychological terms what colonialism is in political terms. That is the cultural analog of colonialism. Make them like us. Since I feel insecure the way they shake hands and the way they talk, and since I am troubled about not having Crest to brush my teeth, let us import Crest, teach them English, etc. I would feel much better because then I would have created for myself a cultural home away from home rather than living at the margin of my culture. I will once again be living at its center, or at least at a peripheral center, somewhere removed from North America.

We do not need to belabor the risks that are involved. But to the degree that we make other people like us, we deprive them of their own culture. We, in fact, make them marginal people. They are then the people who do not know the rules, who have to learn a new language, who have to make the transitions. We lose the opportunity to learn from them.

Another technique used by immigrants to North America is assimilation. "If you can't beat them, join them." That means you become just like they are. Make the jump totally so that there is nothing left on the other side. Become Indian, Japanese, African. Shed every vestige of what you were so that you now become what these people are. That has been the pattern followed by many immigrant groups to the United States and Canada where, because of the peculiar cultural climate and tremendous opportunities, it was relatively easy. Because of this the United States has lost much of the richness of its cultural diversity within a few generations. Many second and third generation Italians no longer speak Italian, for example. Recently, people have taken a new interest in their cultural heritage. They are now going back to find out who they were. But the process of assimilation is also a maladaptive response because we really cannot do it. One cannot become totally unrelated to what he was before. To attempt to do so is to cut oneself off from the deepest roots of one's identity.

A third response, refined to an art by Jewish culture, is the response of the ghetto. "Okay, I will live at the margin, but I will erect walls so that the vast majority of my cultural experiences—work, education, friends, and acquaintances—will occur within a closed community." There are many white man's ghettos in cities around the world, especially in Asia and Africa, where Europeans cluster together to preserve what they have and make as little contact as possible with those people who are strange. The ghetto solution is also a maladaptive solution. For one thing, we become a caricature of what we once were. For example, if I think that in England it is appropriate to have tea at four p.m. and I am living in Rhodesia and I want to retain a cultural identity as English, then tea at four p.m. will become highly ritualized and may be the most important thing in my day because that is what links me to England and to my English identity. It may happen that in England meanwhile they no longer have tea at four p.m., but that makes no difference to me. The possibility of becoming a caricature of what I think I am attempting to preserve is a real one. The ghetto can only be preserved at the price of a high degree of prejudice against those people outside. If I do not erect those barriers of prejudice, I am going to mix. There will be nothing to prevent me from mixing, from making contact, so that I have to carry an "us/them" mentality in order to keep those boundaries sharp and clear.

The Call to the Margin

What is the call of God to us vis-a-vis cultural life? What does the Bible say to us about marginal living, about being exposed, being on the edge, not quite belonging, not knowing where our home is? The missionary must come to grips with this question in a way few Christians ever do. What does the Bible say? It says that the margin is the place for all of us—that the Christian will always live on the margin in relation to culture. Matthew 10:34-39, John 1:11, Romans 1:1 and 12:2 all speak to this. These passages—and many others—tell us that the Christian position vis-a-vis any culture is one of apartness, of being marginal, of not quite belonging. Jesus did not quite belong. It was prophesied he would not and he did not. He was not accepted by his own people. And one of the things that is special about the life-walk of the missionary is that he knows that in a way that many people do not. Those in missionary service sense the price they pay for being a person of God who is always marginal in relationship to the world. We are always exposed and vulnerable. In that sense we are always insecure. And that is the call of God to every believer.

Adaptation at the Margin

How do we adapt if that is what the Lord calls us to? Fortunately, God never asks of us anything greater than He in turn will supply. That of course is the miracle of God's intervention in our behalf. It is designed to meet us precisely at the point of our need.

We need to do two things in order to survive. First, we must be genuinely and deeply rooted in Jesus Christ.

We must be convinced that if we are at the margin, we are there because Christ is Lord and has called us. I do not know any other way to get there. If we try to go it alone, we will fall into one or another of the maladaptations. To know that Christ is Lord and that our marginal life is in obedient response to His call is the bedrock of everything else. We must come back to this when we are buffeted by the vicissitudes of marginal living. We are not there because we are masochists, because we enjoy punishment or pain. We are there because Christ is Lord and He has called us. That is the first half—the vertical half.

The horizontal half is that we must find at the margin the new community. The church is the Christian's home away from home in the sense that we are sojourners here. We are set apart and not received well by the world. In that sense we are homeless and the church is our community. But whereas God calls us to marginal life vis-a-vis secular culture, He puts us right in the center of a new culture and a new community, the body of Christ. The body of Christ is, then, a society. It is the divine society. And God provides for us, at the particular margin where we are, a new community. Now sometimes it might be pretty slim and the differences between us may seem greater than the similarities, but that is because our

priorities are wrong. We are still thinking in the framework of the secular world—if they do not come on time to services, or if they stay too long—but that is not what the new community is all about.

What will this new community be like? As I tried to think through the characteristics of a new community of Christians at the margin, it seemed to me that it would have to have as its participants people of all of the surrounding secular cultures or else it would be a ghetto community again. It must transcend those boundaries. It must be diverse in its makeup. It must be embodied in structures appropriate to those constituent cultures. This may mean some rather odd compromises such as half of the songs in this language and half in that. Finally, its cultural patterns and structures would have to be evaluated by its effectiveness in promoting worship, discipleship, and brotherhood rather than how well it preserves the American way of doing things.

I believe that as we live and participate there we will find that our security, identity, and self-esteem are more and more grounded in the new community. Indeed, the Bible says this is where it ought to be. It is with our Christian brothers and sisters that we find the cultural home that the Lord has provided for us.

The Dynamic of the Margin

Why is it that God calls us to these difficult marginal places and to this kind of life? I believe it is because that is where the action is. In physics, chemistry, biology, in any physical system of which I am aware, the dynamic is always at the interface. To use a popular phrase, it is where the rubber meets the road. It is the point of contact. If we can once find for ourselves stability at the margin, I do not think there is any other place where so much can happen because that is where life, contact, and interaction are greatest. That is the place where a tremendous amount of vitality and life can be seen. Life on the margin can be a life of rare opportunity to make a difference, to have impact, to be effective, and to be affected in return. To live at the margin is to be truly alive and vital as Jesus Christ was.

PAUL AND MISSION

John Driver

Paul's missionary methods are sometimes conceived of in terms of strategy, as if it were primarily a program for accomplishing the task. Obviously this is one way of focusing the question of method or strategy. This orientation, of course, has proved to be attractive, especially in the Western church. I believe that we cannot really understand Paul's missionary methodology when we approach it from this perspective. My thesis is that Paul's methods grew out of his understanding of the nature of the gospel. It is the nature of God's relationship to men; the form of His incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth; the meaning of His message of salvation to mankind which determine Paul's missionary methods as well as his own discipleship. Paul's methods and his understanding of the Gospel are mutually elucidating.

Therefore Paul's methodology does not respond to the accidents of history, nor is it optional in its character. They are not methods which can be added or dropped according to the time or place of mission. Since they communicate the nature of God and of His gospel given through Jesus, His Messiah, they become normative for Paul, and for anyone else who understands the gospel of Jesus as Paul did and would faithfully carry out God's mission in the world.

Far from being the most "efficient" ways of carrying out the Christian mission, Paul's methods will probably be judged inefficient by modern secular standards. But efficiency and success dare not be the criteria by which we determine missionary methods. What counts is their faithfulness to the nature of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Method

1. Paul understood his mission to be divinely ordained within the prophetic tradition of Israel and, as in the case of Jesus, specifically determined by the vision of the

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Servant of Yahweh.

Paul's understanding of mission can scarcely be grasped apart from his extraordinary commissioning on the Damascus road. Rather than conceiving of this experience primarily in terms of "conversion," we can better understand it as a call to mission. Or perhaps the experience could be called a "messianic conversion" which in turn shaped his understanding of mission. In reality Paul's Jewish cosmology, anthropology, theology, and even his morality to a certain extent, remained basically untouched by his Damascus road experience. However, his Christology was transformed beyond his wildest expectations, and this furnished the point of departure for his participation, in deed as well as word, in God's mission in the world. According to Paul's own testimony, his commission to the Gentiles arose directly out of this experience (Acts 9:15; 22:17-21; 26:17; Gal. 1:16; 2:7,8).

This extraordinarily strong sense of being divinely commissioned is further reflected in Paul's own writings. "But then in his good pleasure God, who had set me apart from birth and called me through his grace, chose to reveal his Son to me and through me, in order that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles" (Gal. 1:15,16a; cf. Gal. 2:7; Rom. 1:1; 15:15b,16; I Cor. 1:1, etc. NEB). In describing this divine commission in Gal. 1:15 (lit., "having separated me from the womb of my mother"), Paul uses a direct allusion to the prophetic vocation of Jeremiah (1:5) and to the divine commission given to the Servant of Yahweh (Is. 49:1). Paul's call linked him to the prophetic tradition of Israel and charged him to continue the mission of God's Messiah in the world. Elsewhere in his writings Paul indicates that he understood himself to be divinely commissioned to continue Christ's saving mission to the ends of the earth. The statement of Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia, "I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 13:47) is a direct reference to the second of the Suffering Servant Songs (Is. 49:6). The assurance which Paul received from the Lord in his Corinthian vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you . . ." (Acts 18:9b,10a), is an allusion to Is. 41:10 and 43:5. In Paul's third report of his Damascus road vision, the words of Jesus, "I send you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light . . ." (Acts 26:18 NEB) are a direct allusion to Is. 42:7,16. In his appeal to his Corinthian readers to appropriate God's grace, he quotes from Is. 49:8, "In the day of my favor I gave heed to you; on the day of deliverance I came to your aid" (II Cor. 6:2).

Paul understood his task to be to continue the mission of the Messiah who is a "light to the nations," spreading his salvation to the ends of the earth. In both Acts and the Epistles the Isaiah texts which apply directly to the Servant of Yahweh are applied to Paul. Paul's understanding of his mission is not characterized merely by his extraordinary sense of divine commissioning. He also understands himself to fall within the prophetic tradition of Israel. But what is even more noteworthy is the way in which he understands his mission to be a continuation of that of the Messiah. He is the Servant of Christ, empowered by Christ himself to carry out his mission which, in a sense, remains unfinished. Paul understands his mission to have been prefigured in the person of the Servant of Yahweh, predestined to be "a light to the nations" (Is. 42:6; 49:8). Paul, like Jesus, understood his mission in terms of suffering servanthood. In fact he explicitly refers to his suffering as a continuation of the Messiah's suffering: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body, that is the church" (Col. 1:24).

2. Paul's call to mission can best be understood as a charismatic experience—in the N. T. sense of the term.

According to Paul's own testimony, his knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah came to him by revelation. Paul's vision on the Damascus road initiated his ministry as an "apocalyptic" or "charismatic" prophet. Through a spiritual vision (lit., apocalypse), Jesus was revealed to him to be the Messiah (Gal. 1(12,16). And even beyond this initial spiritual or charismatic experience, apparently spiritual visions were not uncommon to Paul. (See Gal. 2:2; Eph. 3:1-6; I Cor. 2:4; 14:6,26; II Cor. 12:1,7, etc.). Acts reports that in Antioch he functioned as prophet and teacher, and according to I Cor. 12:8,10,28, Rom. 12:6,7, and Eph. 4:11 these are charismatic ministries. Of course, in the context of his discussion concerning the relative usefulness of prophecy and tongues, Paul reports that the gift of tongues has also been granted to him (I Cor. 14:18). According to Acts, Paul must also have received the gifts of the apostolate, of exorcism, of discernment of spirits and of healing. Under the influence of the power of God's Holy Spirit, Paul's earlier religious enthusiasm for the traditions of the Fathers gave way to the consuming passion of messianic mission.

Paul was not simply a charismatic missionary. He sought to reproduce the authentic experience of God's grace in his hearers. In his letter to the Christian community in Corinth, Paul expressed thanksgiving for "the grace of God" which had been given to them in Jesus Christ; and more specifically for the fact that in every way they had been enriched in Him. In fact, confirmation of the testimony to Christ in their midst is seen in the fact that they are "not lacking in any spiritual gift (charismata)" (I Cor. 1:4-7). To the Roman church, whose members he did not know personally, he wrote, "I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift (Charisma Pneumatikon) to strengthen you" (Rom. 1:11). These *charismata* are, of course, the result of the activity of the Spirit of God in the midst of His people and are therefore a

sign of the church's supernatural life. These gifts, Paul wrote, are to be ardently desired in the church (I Cor. 12:31; 14:1).

Paul appreciated fully the powerful intervention of the Holy Spirit in the fulfillment of his mission. To the Thessalonians he wrote, "For our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit . . . for you received the word with much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (I Thes. 1:5,6). He reminded the Galatians that it was the Spirit who worked signs and miracles among them, awakening a response of faith (Gal. 1:2,5). Paul recognized that churches were not founded by human rhetoric or persuasion, but rather by what Christ had wrought through him "by word and deed, by power of signs and wonders, and the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 1:18,19). The charismatic character of the messianic mission which Paul carried out, produced charismatic communities in which spiritual gifts abounded for the common good and whose flowering contributed to the fulness of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

3. Paul considered Jesus' life of obedience to the Father as paradigmatic for the believer's new life in Christ. And this becomes not only a part of his missionary message, but also a basic element of his missionary method. Called to be imitators of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the apostolic missioners, as well as themselves becoming examples to be imitated blend together in Paul's writings. Perhaps the clearest example of this blending is I Thes. 1:5-7. "You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit; so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."

Paul frequently indicated that, like Jesus, his life too provided a model to be imitated by those who received the gospel. "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). Paul was not being arrogant. He was simply following Jesus and expected recipients of the gospel to do the same. Later we shall return to the question of the concrete ethical content of this imitation. But here it is sufficient to point out that Paul's missionary method (and of the N.T. in general) was fundamentally that of modeling the new life which had come in the Messiah. When we read the testimony of Paul from this perspective, the evidence becomes quite impressive.

Paul's farewell charge to the elders of the Ephesian community is prefaced by the statement, "You yourselves know how I lived among you all the time from the first day that I set foot in Asia" (Acts 20:18). Following this we find references to his humility, suffering, persecution, verbal testimony (vss. 19-21), warnings (vs. 31), and fraternal economic practices (vss. 33-35)—in contrast to the false leaders who are described as "fierce wolves" (vs. 29), probably a reference to their life style. One is impressed by the fact that the missionary message was not so much a matter of unincarnated doctrine as it was the proclamation and demonstration of a new way of life and a system of values rooted in the Messiah.

In response to the arrogance manifested among certain elements in the Corinthian congregation Paul writes, "I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us to live according to the scripture, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. I urge you, then, be imitators of me. Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church" (I Cor. 4:6,16,17). Apparently this insistence on giving attention to the concrete form in which Paul modeled the gospel was his universal practice (vs. 17).

Paul also suggests that being "co-imitators" of him is an alternative to living as "enemies of the cross of Christ." "Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:17-20).

Communication of the gospel in propositional as well as exemplary forms blend together in Paul's missionary methodology. "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:9; cf. I Thes. 2:9-12).

Apparently the recipients of the Pauline mission understood from the beginning the fact that Paul's observable activity in their midst was not neutral. His example, even in the seemingly ordinary affairs of life, carried gospel meaning. "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, we did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you. It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate" (II Thes. 3:7-9; cf. Eph. 4:28).

These representative passages point to the fundamental role of Paul's example in his missionary methodology. (Cf. I Tim. 1:16; II Tim. 1:13; 3:10,14; etc.). Of course Paul also expected that other missionaries would use the same methodology (I Tim. 4:12,15; Tit. 2:7,8; cf. I Pet. 5:1-3; Heb. 13:7). Paul was not content merely to witness to Christ's life in general, but he demonstrated certain specific traits and characteristics of Jesus' life. We shall return to this theme when we consider aspects of Paul's missionary message.

4. Because of its far-reaching consequences, probably the most important element in Paul's missionary methodology was his vulnerability, or "weakness" (I Cor. 1:25,27; 2:3). His voluntary renunciation of coercive power

in the fulfillment of his mission is evident at a number of points in Paul's life and thought. The fact that the rise of the modern missionary movement has largely paralleled movements of political and economic conquest has served to keep this basic aspect of Paul's stance hidden from our view. Western missions have continued to ride the crest of economic imperialism right up to our own times. Practically all of the sending is from the West and the North. Much has been made of Paul as an example of missionary fervor and strategy, but hardly anyone has noticed that while Paul moved from the oppressed colonies toward the centers of imperial power in his day, from Antioch and Jerusalem to Athens and Rome, the opposite has been the case in the modern missionary movement. Naturally, in this situation missionaries were not inclined to raise penetrating questions about what this difference in the direction of movement might mean for the missionary enterprise. Was being sent from Palestine to Rome any different than being sent from Rome to one of the oppressed colonies of the Empire? We have come to view the flow of missionaries from England to India and Africa, from Holland to Indonesia, from France and Belgium to Black Africa, from the U.S. to Latin America as normal. And then we have pretended to apply Paul's methods without noticing this fundamental difference. Small wonder that Paul's basic suffering servanthood stance has been overlooked. It has scarcely occurred to us to ask if a rich and powerful church can really communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ. Instead of coming to grips with this problem, the churches and their missionaries have done an un-Pauline thing. They have made peace with the generally accepted dichotomy between the exercise of coercive power in its various forms, on one hand, and the gospel message they verbalize, on the other.

The revolutionary situation of the last decade has alerted many to the distance which separates the orientation of the modern missionary enterprise from the Pauline stance. But we still have a long way to go. I suspect that the distinction which Jim Wallis makes between "establishment Christianity" and "practitioners of biblical faith" can also be applied to missions. Even believer's church missionaries have been seduced into roles determined by establishment power and influence.

Paul's Damascus road experience convinced him that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed God's Messiah in the world. This meant that suffering servanthood was to be God's strategy for mission among the peoples of the earth. It is therefore natural that Paul's missionary stance should be characterized by weakness, by suffering and by sacrifice.

a. I Cor. 1:17-2:5 is a fundamental passage for grasping Paul's understanding of his stance as one of weakness. "And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (2:3-5). The power of God is found in the cross of His Messiah (1:17). The suffering servant Messiah is the power and the wisdom of God (1:24), in contrast to the exercise of power and the intellectual arrogance of the Jews and the Greeks of the first century. It was Paul's understanding that in the incarnation God had, in reality, restored His value system which had been inverted by fallen mankind. This accounts for Paul's insistence on weakness, or vulnerability, as the fundamental stance of the messianic community. That is why Paul in effect calls his stance of weakness "triumph" (II Cor. 2:14). Furthermore, Paul refers to the crucifixion of Christ "in weakness" as the rationale for his own weakness (II Cor. 13:4).

I Cor. 1:17-2:5 reminds us that this stance of vulnerability was no more acceptable in the first century than it is in the twentieth. For that reason Paul's—and the early church's—insistence on maintaining this stance is all the more remarkable.

I Cor. 9:19-23, which is sometimes interpreted in terms of evangelistic strategy, is actually a remarkable illustration of Paul's vulnerable stance. Although Paul enjoyed the status of a free man, he voluntarily made himself a slave to all (19). Although Paul had been freed from the narrowness of nationalistic legalistic Judaism, he was willing to submit to legalistic Jewish requirements (20). Although Paul by birth belonged to the covenant community, he voluntarily became as a Gentile (lit., lawless) (21). Although Paul was of a strong conscience, he willingly accommodated himself to his brethren with weak consciences (22). "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (22).

The course of action described in these verses is no mere strategy of missionary accommodation, nor a methodology of psychological identification. On the contrary, he did it "for the sake of the gospel that (he might) share in it" (9:23). He did these things because it is of the nature of the gospel to live this way. All of these steps are voluntary acts of subordination which partake of the nature of the gospel. Jesus himself had set the precedent for Paul: ". . . though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (II Cor. 8:9); He "who knew no sin [was made] to be sin . . . so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Cor. 5:21); "Who, though he was in the for of God . . . emptied himself taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:6,7).

This is the only kind of social mobility which is consistent with the gospel of Jesus, downward mobility in conformity with God's mission in the world. We do violence to both Paul and the gospel when we interpret "becoming all things to all men" to cover prayer breakfasts with officials, or golf with the major, or hunting trips with the generals on the pretext of witnessing. This is

no license for the missionary to hobnob with the embassy crowd or the foreign business community. In fact this passage points in the opposite direction.

b. A closely related characteristic of Paul's mission was the suffering and persecution it brought him. In fact this is the other side of the weakness-vulnerability coin (II Cor. 11:30). The apostolic stance means vulnerability. And the world's certification of this apostolate is persecution. Of course we should have expected this in Paul from the moment when he understood his mission in terms of suffering servanthood. In fact, he explicitly refers to his suffering as a continuation of the Messiah's suffering. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake; and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body, that is the church" (Col. 1:24).

II Cor. 4:10-12 expresses this fact with extraordinary clarity: "Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you." The grammatical construction of this passage makes it clear that it is not with the death of Christ understood in some mystical sense that Paul identifies himself, but rather "the killing of Jesus:" "Always carrying in the body the killing of Jesus." The forms which the historic suffering and killing of Jesus took also aply to Paul's understanding of the apostolic mission as a continuation of suffering servanthood (cf. II Cor. 1:5).

The sufferings to which Paul refers over and over again are not merely the dangers inherent in first century travel, although these should not be underestimated. "Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, . . . danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea . . ." (II Cor. 11:25-26). It was more than hardships inherent in an itinerant ministry, although it certainly included that. "In toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches" (II Cor. 11:27-28).

It was in effect a "cross," the world's verdict in response to his revolutionary activity (Acts 17:6,7 Jerusalem Bible) and to his life and message which so patently contradicted the generally accepted social values. The sufferings which Paul bore were basically those of a prophetic dissident at odds with the prevailing system. It was precisely because of the gospel that Paul wrote "I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal" (II tim. 2:9). Persecution, suffering, imprisonment became practically an apostolic characteristic in the N.T. But we are reminded that this is not only a characteristic of the apostle. It has also been the lot of the prophets (Mt. 5:12). Jesus said that it would also be the portion of His followers (Mt. 5:10,11). And Paul expected his followers to suffer the same fate (II Tim. 1:8; 3:12; I Thes. 1:6; II Thes. 1:4,5; etc.).

Although he reports it with considerable hesitation, the record of Paul's experience at the hands of the Law is impressive. "Fettered like a criminal." "Far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned" (II Cor. 11:23-25; cf. 6:4,5).

All of this should lead us to read with more realism Paul's allusion to himself as "an ambassador in chains" (Eph. 6:20). Being ambassador for the kingdom of God among the "nations" entailed repression and suffering at the hands of the "powers." The "powers" respond to the gospel in the form of "chains." In spite of the care taken in Acts to avoid blaming the cause of persecution on the Roman authorities and transferring it rather to the Jews and satanic opposition, we are left with the inescapable impression that apostolic mission in the world of the first century necessarily implied suffering and persecution. Apparently there was no other way to authentically communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

c. Paul furthermore insisted that the apostolic mission calls for personal sacrifice, even including those benefits which he rightly could have claimed for himself. Note especially his attitude toward self-support and even suffering poverty in the interests of the unhindered fulfillment of his mission. Although he was rightfully entitled to economic support from those whom he served, he did not claim it because, as he said, "we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ" (I Cor. 9:18). Work, in order not to be a burden while preaching the gospel, was simply a part of the way in which Paul communicated "kingdom living" in his mission (I Thes. 2:9-12). Paul makes it clear that his practice of self-support was essential to his communication of the gospel. "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:34,35; cf. Eph. 4:28, etc.).

5. Paul's methodology included his concern for the unity of the Body of Christ. He roundly repudiated denominationalism. In effect Corinthian Christians had been forming groups under various "names" or "denominations" (I Cor. 1:10-12; 3:3,4). Paul could have taken the easy course by ignoring the other factions who probably would have eventually withered away. Or he could have promoted his own "denomination," a thing which he refused to do. Instead he insisted that the richness of diversity which contributes to "the fulness of Christ" must be built upon the only foundation there is, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3:11).

Peter, Paul, and Apollos had their differences in terms of Jewish Law, Greek wisdom, styles of preaching, and matters of personality. Paul did not seek to smooth over these differences or give the impression that people were free to choose one or another according to their personal preferences. On the contrary, he wrote of a foundation upon which all subsequent missionaries were called to build (I Cor. 3:5-15). In this particular case Paul had laid the foundation (3:10) which by its very nature is unique (3:11). This oneness of the church is indispensable to its being and according to Paul the ultimate survival of a missionary's work depends on his respecting that foundation (3:11) and building upon it in a way consistent with the nature of that foundation (3:12-14).

Paul's conviction that the church of Jesus Christ is essentially one led him to collect funds among the Hellenistic churches for the brotherhood in Jerusalem. He opposed pressures which would have forced all Christians into a Jewish mold (Judaizers) or who would have simply allowed the Jewish branch to wither away (Hellenists). Paul went out of his way to maintain relationships with Greek and Jewish elements of the church and did so at the considerable price of persecution and personal suffering because of his conviction that the essence of the gospel lies in the destruction of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles through the creation of a new humanity in which the old causes of separation are overcome (Eph. 2:11-22; Gal. 3:28).

6. Finally, one notes that in the Pauline experience of mission the role of the local congregation is fundamental. Paul and Barnabas were commissioned and sent out from the congregation in Antioch (Acts 13:2,3) and at least twice Paul returned to the congregation to give an accounting of his work (Acts 14:26,27; 18:22,23).

Both Acts and Paul's epistles bear witness to the fact that invariably the Pauline mission led to the formation of a local messianic community. Each of these local communities was fully the church. In Paul's thought it is not the sum of individual congregations that produces the total Christian community. Each community, however small, represents the total community. Even a small fellowship such as a house church can be called a church (Rom. 16:5). And it can be listed together with other larger congregations (I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15,16). In fact Paul can write of the "church of God," referring to a single congregation (I Cor. 1:2), as well as in the plural of the "churches of God." It apparently does not occur to Paul to make a qualitative distinction between the total church and the individual congregation.

This fact underscores the importance of Paul's church planting mission. He does not understand his apostolic activity as simply contributing to the growth of the total church (although he does conceive of the church in terms which are universal and even cosmic (Cf. Col. and Eph.), but as leading to the emergence of the church of God (or Christ) in its particular local expression. While a brotherly sense of responsibility led Paul to report back to Antioch "all that God had done" (Acts 14:27), the new congregations in Iconium, Lystra, and Antioch of Pisidia were the "church of God" in the same sense that the congregation in Antioch of Syria was the church.

Message

It is certainly un-Pauline to attempt to distinguish between method and message in understanding his apostolic mission. As we have seen, the rationale for the particular methods which Paul employed rests in the content which these communicate. The **way** the gospel is communicated determines **what** is communicated, and vice versa. In order to understand more fully Paul's concept of his mission, however, we should also view it from the perspective of content or message. This will complement what we have already learned through approaching it from the perspective of missionary method or posture.

1. Paul's message was concretely Christological. His call to imitation was not merely a general appeal to follow the heavenly Christ. It was also a call to imitate Paul, as he imitated Jesus, in certain specific ways. Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah incarnate, is the example which lies behind Paul's invitation to imitation.

We must not underestimate the importance for Paul of the humanity of Jesus. Paul's apostolic activity following the Damascus road vision was profoundly influenced by the historical career of Jesus the Messiah. In his use of the term "Kingdom of God," Paul surely echoes the proclamation of Jesus himself. Acts uses the term five times with reference to Paul, and it appears some 14 times in Paul's writings. Paul refers at a number of points in his writings to specific teachings of Jesus, granting to them an authority comparable to that which Caesar demanded in the secular realm.

In Rom. 15:1-6 Paul bases his appeal "to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves" squarely on the example of Jesus, who did not please himself but suffered the reproaches of others. He concludes with an appeal to live in harmony with each other "after the manner of Jesus" (NEB). Paul makes a similar appeal in I Cor. 10:24-11:1: "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour." In support of this Paul speaks of his own concern to "please all men" (vs. 33) in everything he does, not seeking his own advantage. This is the context of the call to imitation in 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

Paul also notes that Jesus is a model of forgiveness. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32; cf. Col. 3:13). Jesus is also a concrete example of the form which love takes. "Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2).

In I Thes. 1:6,7; 2:14,15 Jesus, along with the prophets

and the Christian communities in Judea, is presented as an example to be imitated. But, again, it is notable that this is not a call to imitation in some general and vague way. There is rather one clear and specific point to be imitated: patient and loyal obedience even in the midst of suffering (Cf. Heb. 5:8,9; 12:1ff). The invitation in Phil. 3:17, "Brethren, join in imitating me," according to the context also points to this particular concrete aspect of Paul's (and Jesus') life—suffering for the sake of obedience. "That I may . . . share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Phil. 3:10). According to I Cor. 4:16,17, Paul's readers are urged to imitate his "ways in Christ." Here again the context supplies us with the specific content of this imitation. They are to imitate the servanthood stance of Paul (4:1), which means, according to Paul, "to live according to the scripture" (4:6).

Finally, the well known passage in Phil. 2:3-11 can be cited as another example of the concrete way in which Paul expected believers to imitate the example of Jesus Christ. Messiahship according to the suffering servant model, with all that it means in terms of self-giving, vulnerable, sacrificial service, is God's way to authentic exaltation and lordship. Paul's appeal to the form of Jesus' messiahship gives concrete form to the humility and unselfish interest in the welfare of others that Paul commends to the Philippian Christians.

Paul's missionary message calls for concrete conformity to the words and deeds and Spirit of Jesus the Messiah, and especially to His suffering servanthood and what this means in terms of social relationships among the citizens of his kingdom.

2. Paul's message was essentially eschatological. Paul, as well as other N.T. writers, speaks of "this age" or "the present evil age" (Rom. 12:2; I Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:4) and "the age which is to come" (Eph. 1:21). Paul's understanding of "this age" and the "age to come" does not have to do primarily with time sequence, although the temporal aspect is not entirely absent. They are basically qualitative categories which describe distinct realms. The "coming age" is the realm of God's power inaugurated in the event of Christ's life, death, and resurrection and is already present and effective in the world in the person and activity of God's Spirit. The "present evil age" is the world which God has created but which is held in bondage by hostile evil powers. The two ages are seen to co-exist between the incarnation and the parousia. The "present evil age" in which man stands enslaved by the powers of this world, alien to God and hostile to His purpose, is the sphere in which the Pauline mission is carried out. And it is the proclamation of the gospel which opens up the new possibility of life in "the age to come."

Paul uses a rich variety of terms to describe man's possession by the evil powers of this age, his alienation from, and his hostility to God, and, finally, his bondage to the powers of sin and of death. On the other hand, "the transcendent power" of God (II Cor. 4:7), operative in and through the power of his Spirit which participates of the "age to come," will one day destroy fully and finally the evil powers of "this age." Therefore the salvation to which Paul's mission points will be future.

But even though God's power transcends the present age and stands over against the powers to which this age is in bondage, God's power is nevertheless already effective for men in Christ. The two spheres meet, as it were, in Him through whom God is already in this present time reconciling the world unto himself (II Cor. 5:19). Paul describes the saving effects of God's power in terms of a "new creation" (Gal. 6:15; II Cor. 5:17). Man's existence is "new" by virtue of a new relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Therefore Paul understands that the "eschatological" power of God is already operative. In Christ a "new creation" has come about. There is a sense in which the old age has passed away and the new age has dawned (II Cor. 5:17). So in addition to being a future hope, salvation for Paul is also a present reality. Paul declares with emphasis, "Behold now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). By this he does not mean that it has been manifested in all of its fullness, but rather than it has already occurred and is effective.

In the O.T. (Joel 2) as well as in late Judaism, the sign of the coming of the eschaton was to be the coming of the Spirit of God with power. For Paul also, the presence of the Spirit of God signifies the coming of the new age. But in his understanding of the work of the Spirit, one observes again the dialectic in Paul between the present and future aspects of salvation. On one hand, the Spirit represents the actual entry of the eschaton into the present age (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 4:6,7). The Spirit "gives life" (present tense, II Cor. 3:6). On the other hand, the Spirit is also a harbinger of that which is yet to come. In Rom. 8:11 Paul says, "If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised from the dead Christ Jesus will give life (future tense) also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwelling in you." The Spirit makes present that which belongs to the "age to come," as well as certifying by His present activity that which is still to come with the full flowering of the kingdom.

Paul uses metaphors to express this dialectic truth. He speaks of the "firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23). The firstfruits represent the full harvest which is coming. The Spirit does not merely precede the "coming age," but actually bears it and represents the power of that age, i.e., of God Himself, already at work. A second metaphor speaks of the Spirit as a "guarantee" given by God (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5). *Arrabon* is a Semitic term which literally means "down payment," or the first installment of what has been promised. Just as the down payment is a part of the total sum that will be forthcoming, so the Spirit, present already in God's new creation, is a guarantee of

that which is yet to come.

For Paul, "in Christ" does not merely describe a mystical relationship, purely spiritual or invisible, but rather the concrete sphere in which believers live. It is the "age to come" in which Christ's lordship is recognized and obeyed. Physically, the believer lives in the world and has no other alternative but to be subjected to the material limitations of "this present evil age which is passing away." But spiritually and morally he lives on another level. "In Christ" he participates already in the "age to come."

The characteristic juxtaposition with which Paul begins some of his epistles ("To the saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi," or "in Colossae" and "Ephesus" illustrates perfectly the eschatological context in which Paul carried out his mission. "In Christ" a new creation had been achieved. The age to come had already dawned. By the power of the Spirit, men and women were already coming to experience the life of the kingdom. Meanwhile "in Philippi" and "in Colossae," life in this "present evil age which is passing away" was still going on. But Paul and his followers were convinced that it was an existence which had no future. The object of the Pauline mission was nothing less than the formation in the power of God's Spirit of communities of the future, of the new humanity. They are the eschatological people of God whose life is determined not by the values of the present age but by those of the age to come.

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Contents

A New Thrust in Urban Missions, Lupe De Leon, Jr.
The Plight of the Burned Out Pastor, Dwight J. McFadden, Jr.
Gospel at Home, Theron F. Schlabach
Missionary Congregations - An Editorial Comment
No More Crusades, Charles R. Taber

A NEW THRUST IN URBAN MISSIONS

Lupe De Leon, Jr.

Assembly 77 could be recognized as the Mennonite Church's awakening to the need to reckon with its obligation and responsibility to those mission workers it has commissioned and sent to proclaim and serve, particularly in cities.

Surrounded by the breathtaking beauty, vastness, and freshness of the Rockies, some may have been tempted to forget what the church's missionary task is all about. Yet many came to Estes Park 77 with a burden to share. They shared it. The group sought to have Assembly focus on the issues related to developing Christian community (churches, storefronts, and otherwise) in the cities. The Assembly adopted the "Urban Concerns Statement" and gave our General Board the mandate to "build a fire" under church agencies, conferences, boards, and committees for response.

The Mennonite Board of Missions home ministries division programs have taken seriously this concern and are endeavoring to develop a model whereby these five program divisions can pool their services to resource an urban group to better minister in their community. But what do we mean by urban?

Urbanization means the migration and concentration of people: the emergence of new and infinitely more complex social arrangements, interactions, and relationships and an evolving urban consciousness. It means a complex, interdependent convergence of countless ecosystems. It is characterized by density of population, diversity of ethnic and religious communities, complex economic processes, intricate political arrangements, and a variety of lifestyles.

For mission to flourish in the urban context it is understood that one needs to be concerned about the needs of all segments of population there. The church faces an enormous challenge and opportunity to share God's love and to renew and strengthen His church in this complex society.

The Church's Response to Urban Ministry in the Last Decade

Mission churches were started in various urban settings in North America by missionaries who had a deep concern for the problems of the cities. They felt called by God to provide a Mennonite Christian witness in those locations. In the last 30 years or so the growth that has occurred in the North American Mennonite constituency has been largely due to the missionary efforts of persons working in ethnic minority communities in cities. A few of these missionary endeavors have taken place in the major metropolitan areas of our continent: New York City; Washington, D.C.; Toronto; Montreal; Cleveland; Chicago; St. Louis; Portland; Los Angeles, and other locations. In some of these locations we went in with poorly prepared personnel and no strategy at all. In spite of our lack of expertise, the Lord has blessed the efforts of these courageous pioneers.

The pattern of bringing auxiliary services into the community emerged slowly but surely. It was not long before missionaries in urban settings were asking the churchwide agencies to help them with voluntary service personnel, Christian education, leaders, facilities for kindergarten and day care centers and other types of

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social services. In most locations these efforts proved to be a blessing to the immediate community that was being served, they became burdens too heavy for local "converts" to carry on when church agencies pulled out financial resources and personnel. In a few locations the auxiliary services model of church development worked successfully. However, one needs to recognize that the success of the model has always been contingent on outside funding and/or personnel.

The urban churches' urgent plea to mother churches for help is not new. The conflicts and problems that urban people face have been and will continue to be present for years to come. As a consequence of the Minority Ministries Council, the Mennonite Church responded with the Compassion Fund for remedying some of the ills that confronted (in most cases) urban minority Mennonite congregations.

The dream held that with outside seed monies for special projects the local congregation could eventually become self-sufficient and independent from conferences or other church structures. It was felt that due to the ties that bound mission congregations to their respective districts, conferences, and mission boards, they were unable to really experience church life in the context of their sociological situation and ethnic homogeneity. Attempts were made to help in the development of small businesses, tutoring programs, day care centers, and other similar auxiliary services to the communities that Mennonite churches were serving.

Experience now shows us that we were barely able to scratch the surface with our efforts. It is discouraging to see the reality of the enormous problems in communities served by our churches and the difficulty we have in becoming positive agents of reconciliation and progress in those communities. But no one can say that we have not tried. No one can say that God has not blessed us. He has used our efforts to touch people in those communities. We are guilty of lacking strategy and resourceful personnel, but we have been involved. I hope what we have learned from our past involvement can influence our new thrust in the decade to come.

The Urban Challenge for the Next Decade

It needs to be understood that while I advocate social services as a necessary part of our ministry in reaching the unsaved, for the purpose of this particular article, I am speaking from the perspective, role, and task of the Home Missions Division as it responds to its obligation to build Christian community in an urban society. Our primary task in home missions is to help in the development and formation of congregations. I see this as a primary motivation for responding to a new urban thrust. Home Missions Division does not intend to build institutions. Other divisions and other church agencies exist to provide supplementary services to the communities in which our churches are located. We see the main goal of Home Missions to be calling people to repentance and building a Christian community of disciples.

City missions were attempting to serve in the midst of an explosive exodus of middle-class professionals from the cities. While this phenomenon is demoralizing, in many respects the positive side of the exodus is that those who move can be challenged to form house churches wherever they go. Their mobility, rather than a cop-out,ought to be seen as a possible new extension of the church. The inner city congregation, on the other hand, will find it quite difficult to become independent—financially and otherwise—of the mother church.

The urban challenge for years to come will intensify as crises give rise to alienation and apathy. The rural and suburban portion of the Mennonite Church needs to understand life better as it is in an urban society. Will we be challenged and motivated to leave the quietness and security of our communities to respond to the missionary call in the urban context? "Famine and disasters have always aroused our sympathies. We have opened our hearts and our purses to relief to the suffering. Our Mennonite relief efforts have been massive and our disaster service is widely and officially recognized. The question that arises, however, is whether we are as well and as highly recognized as being responsive to the other famine, the famine of the spirit. What is it that pulls at our heartstrings? What is it that motivates us to sacrificial self-giving?"[1]

Our challenge is not to lend a hand solely for the betterment of people's living conditions. While schools, health programs, medical services, adequate housing, and so on, need to be addressed and remedied, the fundamental need still remains—our main task is to call people to Christ and His Lordship. "It it is human need that motivates us, then our missionary activity becomes secularized and humanized. But if growing out of our loving and living relationship with Him we seek to glorify His Name, human service as well as the witness of the Word find their strongest motivation and their clearest meaning. It is after all His work, not ours. He is building His church. He is building His Kingdom and bringing it to its final consummation at the end of history. We are building with Him for eternity. Ours is no task of a few years or of a lifetime. With Him we look with anticipation towards the grand consummation at the end of time when His Kingdom will be established in fully glory and power."[2]

The challenge remains. If the Mennonite Church is going to be obedient to its missionary task it must without reservation respond with all of its available resources to its newest and most complex missionary field, the cities in North America. Our most successful missionary work has been among ethnic minorities. Upwards of 80 percent of Blacks and Latinos are urban dwellers. Native Americans leaving reservations migrate to urban industrialized areas. Our mission field in the inner cities is not "white as snow," but decayed, polluted, crime-ridden, and hardened.

Our mission on the fringes of the city meets a similar callousness. The almighty dollar, home ownership, job security, and apathy towards human need makes this mission field a difficult and challenging one. Nevertheless this is the condition of our world and society. It is to this that we must respond. The issues of whether we work

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deliberately at building cross-cultural communities of believers or building strictly along the lines of those sharing a common culture and language (homogeneous social units) needs to be seriously considered.

It is true that our Spanish-speaking Mennonite congregations have grown far more significantly with a shift from bilingual, bicultural emphases to a ministry directed primarily at Spanish-speaking people. However, this is not true of our Black congregations. By the same token, it cannot be said that the cross-cultural congregations in general have displayed significant growth. So the evidence is mixed, and before I would advocate shaping our new challenge in this decade according to the dictates of the homogeneous social unit concept, I would be personally challenged by the issues raised on the principle at the Lausanne Theology and Education Group Consultation (Pasadena, California, May 31-June 2, 1977).

We must affirm our rich cultural diversity. In affirming diverse cultural backgrounds we must deal with the apparent contradiction of "how then can the unity of the church and the diversity of cultures be reconciled with one another? More particularly how can separate homogeneous unit churches express the unity of the body of Christ?" The other side of the issue is that it is a known fact that in several countries the homogeneous unit type of church development is the one that is most rapidly growing. This points out the need for us as a church continuously to be challenged by what the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is experiencing. Mennonites should not be guilty of making the Mennonite Church a biologically and/or spiritually homogeneous unit church. I see this as an open-ended issue that we must constantly keep in mind as we try to build mission communities in the world.

Components of a New Thrust

The home ministries divisions of Mennonite Board of Missions (home missions, relief and service, student services, health and welfare, mass communication) have taken seriously the challenge to respond to the needs of urban churches. We are proposing to pool available resources for Christian witness and congregation building in a given urban location. We hope that a model may be developed that can then be duplicated in other locations.

The Mennonite General Board staff is meeting with leadership people of the various conferences to raise consciousness of the urban concerns and also solicit counsel and support for this new thrust.

Workers are going to be one of the necessary and important components of new urban ministries.

It has been stated that in the past Mennonties have been geared to the recruitment of unmarried college-age youth who could afford to be in service for several years. We then assigned them to churches upon request, mostly to city churches. By the time community people felt comfortable with volunteers it was time for them to leave. The cycle continued year after year. The benefit, in most cases, appeared to favor the persons being sent more than it did the community being served. We must look seriously at the needs in the city and, has been stated, big cities demand "big leaguers."

Workers for the coming decade must be persons who can play ball in the big leagues. Consequently this means some changes in our present recruitment procedures. Many of our leadership people in urban situations are frustrated and disillusioned. Ways need to be found whereby these persons can receive additional training to equip them better for their tasks. The church needs to work at establishing sabbaticals—leaves of absence for missionary personnel—so as to provide freshness of ideas and spirit for these urban workers.

Glenn Brubacher has challenged the Mennonite Church style of evangelism (*Mission Focus* [2:4, March 1974]). Whether evangelism is a natural outgrowth of every believer being a missionary and servant of Jesus, or whether evangelism is to be done by people specially appointed to the task in communities distant from where most of our members live, we need to awaken to our evangelistic responsibility.

Further observation is made that most Mennonite congregations in North America are not evangelistic in their congregational life. The major component of urban ministries in our present decade will have to take into consideration that it will need the support and commitment of the total church to respond to the urgent need in the urban context. We will need to recruit people diligently from within our constituency who are looking for a place to serve. We need to utilize the existing fellowships of students and young adults. They need to be challenged to go beyond a fellowship status and commit themselves to reaching other persons in their community for Christ. The network is set. The desire is there. We must channel those energies into areas of service that will build Christian community.

All of our rhetoric, all of our conferences, all of our good intentions will be measured not by words but by deeds. Our urban missionaries have requested that the church stand behind them and we have said that we will. Those of us with administrative responsibilities are trying to be as sensitive as we can be to this need. The constituency that we serve needs to recognize the complexity of the urban context. It is not only the poor and destitute in the inner city that we are talking about, but it is also the more affluent professional and in many cases apathetic persons that we find on the fringes of the city. Our task of proclaiming the gospel is essential for both groups. Whatever method we use must be relevant for the particular urban people with whom we are working.

This is a new beginning. We must together seek creative ways in which church extension can happen in an urban society. We have not been extremely successful but we have been blessed. Whatever strategy is developed has to be the kind that people can support and believe in. It will take people to carry out this new emphasis.

Footnotes

1. J. D. Graber, "Motivating for Mission," *Mission-Focus* 1:4 (March 1973) 1.
2. idem, 5.

THE PLIGHT OF THE BURNED OUT PASTOR

Dwight J. McFadden, Jr.

Urban pastor, urban church, urban ministry—the expectations are high and adequate resources to meet the challenge often lacking. The urban church must address itself to many needs. The urban pastor often becomes the means through which the congregation meets these needs. Yet the problems the pastor faces demand more than one person can give on a sustained level. The conditions and the needs of the people with whom the pastor deals tend to take an untimely toll of energy and gifts. The pastor wears down; he begins to suffer what some persons have labeled "burnout."

The symptoms which characterize "burned out" pastors include the following:

- The pastor may dehumanize the persons with whom he works by treating them as objects rather than human beings.
- The pastor may make light of stressful issues or problems being dealt with in the community or congregation.
- The pastor may frequently be unavailable to people and for meetings.
- The pastor becomes sick more frequently and tends to be depressed.

These are only a few of the symptoms which my occur. Little research has been done on this question, but clearly the urban situation poses unique problems. Dr. Christina Maslach, assistant psychology professor at the University of California, has done research in this area. Professor LeRoy Spanial of Boston University and colleague Shulamit Teck, director of Eastern Institute for Group and Family Theories, have done research specifically on the professional "burnout" syndrome. People in helping professions are most apt to suffer from burnout.

The Leader's Personal Needs

The leadership of an urban church must minister to the whole person. The pastor must have the sum total of his own needs met in the same way. Just as his ministry to people is inclusive—social, economic, psychological, physical, and spiritual—his needs in these areas must also be fulfilled adequately. The urban pastor has fellowship with members of the congregation, but he also needs to socialize with his peers in the ministry who are working at church building in the city. In many urban settings there are few colleagues of his own denomination with whom he can take counsel. Most pastors in the city do participate in interdenominational ministerial associations, but some pastors are unable to share with anyone the burdens they carry from ministering to their congregations. The pastor may think he is less than a leader if he cannot handle the problems facing the congregation, much less his own problems. He may forget that other urban pastors experience similar problems and can empathize and give counsel.

In the city we find that pastors do not always have sufficient resources. The cost of living is higher than in most nonurban areas. If a pastor has to worry about how he is going to make it through the week, he will have a hard time keeping his mind on his work. The tent-making ministry is usually a problem for pastors who work in urban areas. There is not enough time to give both to the work of the church and to a job. One of these obligations will suffer. If an urban pastor works hard at both ministry and self-support, he will find the strain producing an even quicker burnout. Mennonite urban pastors are not getting rich!

Mental fatigue is a common problem among urban pastors. High expectations by the congregation and/or sponsoring agencies provide an extra amount of pressure. It is usually not said, but it is understood that the urban pastor has a field to harvest in the city and he is expected to pick a record crop. The urban pastor is not always prepared to handle all of the areas of planting, nurturing, and harvesting. He may know the problems facing the community but is not able to deal with them. He may be able to deal with the problems but does not know the community. Either way the urban pastor is frustrated, even though he has one of these strengths. The advance of psychological strain is rapid when energies become frustrated.

Pastors put a great deal of mileage on their bodies in the urban community. They run themselves down physically. Attention to long-range planning slips away when the needs are immediate. The pastor may also lack the right kind of physical exercise. He wears himself out by running all over the community.

Urban pastors are so overwhelmed by their task that they forget that work can be delegated to others or that a team can handle the job better. And a team is not always available to help. Urban pastors frequently take on a superman role. They are often forced into this role by the expectation that they can do all things. A superman syndrome develops. The pastor thinks that no one can do the job as well as he can and that it needs immediate care and he should be responsible for it.

The pastor does not always find time to cultivate his spiritual life. He is concerned about the spiritual well-being of others and sometimes neglects his own spiritual life and that of his family. The urban pastor needs a significant person with whom he can talk about his and his family's spiritual welfare. It is easy to overlook needs close to home because he is preoccupied with his ministry to others.

Role Conflict

The urban pastor faces certain expectations by virtue of his position in the community. He is put in the situation

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where he is a general practitioner, but he must be a specialist in order to be a success. He must continually deal with these conflicting demands.

The effective urban minister must be oriented toward his church community, while success requires denominational orientation. These demands are sometimes in conflict. The urban pastor stands in a prophetic role, but if he acts as an advocate and speaks prophetically, he does not fit the model of the saint. In addition the urban pastor faces time conflicts: long hours of work compete with family obligations. He must deal with these varied and conflicting expectations and must at the same time develop an authentic ministry that preserves his personal integrity. The urban pastor who cannot move in and out of these many roles may be consumed by the stress and tension caused by role conflict.

Organizational Needs

The urban church's response to local opportunities may grow into an institutional program. The organization of this operation or institution becomes the responsibility of the pastor. Frequently the institution moves away from the church and runs parallel to it. The pastor's energies are divided between leading and fulfilling the job originally assigned by the congregation. The shift creates a gap and sometimes a conflict of expectations. The institution takes more of the pastor's time; the congregation as such gets less attention. The dilemma is real. While the purpose of the church is ministry, the institutional ministry replaces church. How is the purpose and program of the church kept in creative balance?

Where do we go from here?

We have noted some of the problems and difficult situations the urban pastor faces—how do we work at solutions to some of these problems?

In a leadership seminar in Elkhart, Indiana, October 1977, a group of urban pastors and lay leaders worked through what it means to be a biblical community and fulfill our mandate. Reflection on this seminar may help to pinpoint some ways in which we as a church can work at the plight of the burned out pastor. The seminar included some models that may be helpful for pastoring in the urban setting.

A look at the nature of the believers church helps us draw a conclusion about our responsibility to our shepherds who are becoming burned out.

In relationship to Christ, as a believers church we are:

- A chosen race (I Pet 2:9-10)
- The body of Christ (Eph 6:15-16)
- The household of God (Eph 2:19-22)
- An eschatological community (Acts 1:11, Mt 25:14-30, I Thess 5:12)

In relationship to each other we share:

- Fellowship, love, and caring (Acts 2:43-47, Eph 4:15, I Cor 13)
- Admonition, forgiveness, convenanting (Mt 18:15-18, I Cor 5:3)
- A variety of gifts (I Cor 12)
- Local and universal completeness (Acts 15, Jn 17:21)

In relationship to the world we are:

- Pilgrims and strangers (Mt 10:16ff, Jn 2:15)
- Ministers of reconciliation (II Cor 5:17-20)
- Witnesses and prophets (Acts)
- Disciples and citizens (Rom 12:13, I Pet 2:4-17)

In looking at how we relate to each other as a believers church, we are made aware that a variety of gifts are given to us (I Cor 12). In the urban area it seems, logically, that we would have a **group ministry** or team ministry to apply the variety of gifts given to us. A group ministry would allow different members of the team to take on differing responsibilities in accord with their gifts. There would be built-in support systems with this kind of arrangement. The group could carry the burden and the work load together rather than strapping down one person with the total responsibility. Members of the leadership team could take sabbaticals and breaks without undue interruption of the congregation's ministry. A senior pastor might oversee the work of the team which would function as a core group leading the congregation's internal and external ministry.

Ideally, a congregation will have increasing people resources from among its members to complement and extend the specialized functions of its leaders or shepherds. In looking at the development of people resources for urban churches, one model to consider we might call a **continuing education program.** This program would touch every area of the lives of people in the urban congregation—home, church, occupation, and school.

The continuing education program would function on all levels in the church. All members would be involved in the study of family life, the Bible, how to better prepare for a future occupation, how to be best prepared in the present occupation or school situation. The congregation would discern members' gifts and weaknesses and would provide counseling support for improvement and follow up on development and future support.

One example of how this method might work is the case of a fictitious person. John Brown has been a member of the church since he was 14 years old. John is now 23, and his family has since become a part of the church. The pastor counseled with John's parents and siblings during John's participation in the congregation. John was taught the Bible, has seen family life models and received tutoring on problems he had relating to school. The pastor challenged John to consider a particular profession.

John had not thought about college before he started attending church, but now the pastor had helped to plant a seed. John admired a psychologist the church had in to lead a number of seminars. John wanted to be a psychologist. One of the members on the leadership team helped John to find out what it takes to be a psychologist. They sent for catalogs and information for different colleges.

John wanted to attend a Christian college. The leadership team encouraged this move. The youth leader at church along with other members of the leadership team helped John apply at a Christian college. The pastor with John investigated the quality of education and the social atmosphere there. The pastor contacted the college and helped to work out a financial package. At college John received periodic visits from the pastor and members

of the church. He was encouraged to maintain involvement with a local church.

John worked around home during summers and also participated as a leader in the youth group in his congregation.

John graduated from college. He is doing graduate work at the local university and is working there as well. He is helping the congregation as a member of the leadership team in youth counseling. John is being encouraged by the congregation to do more postgraduate study. The congregation is growing in ministry and developing potential along with John.

Following along with one of its members must be an invigorating experience for the leaders, too. The team by force of interest and involvement is challenged to grow to its potential.

Practical Pastoral Training

Urban pastors are in a position to take advantage of institutions of higher education in their local communities. They need to be motivated to continue their education, share gained knowledge, and get away from the demands of ministry for periods of time. The urban pastor should be required to do a specified number of hours of study credit per year in practical theology, urban ministry, urban studies, and other areas of need.

The pastor should take courses throughout the year and meet with two one-week periods of class time at a college or seminary away from home and one course at a local institution. Pastors could work toward a bachelor's degree in practical theology or in other areas. Pastors with BA's could work toward MA's in practical theology, religion, and so on. One would hope that the work could be done at a Mennonite college or seminary.

The pastor's motivation for self-improvement and a break from work would be one of the requirements that the congregation and sponsoring agencies and the conference would include as part of his job description. Apart from studies on campus, the pastor would maintain contact with a counselor for work on a project that would deal with some aspect of the congregational program.

Congregational Life Audit

A program could be set up whereby urban congregations could evaluate and report progress on the goals they set for themselves. Ways of developing skills needed to carry out the program for the church could be shared. The life audit could also be set up to report community trends. It might measure the influence of the congregation in the community. It could report the investment of money, time, and skills in a congregational project and the return on these investments even if they are very small. This report and audit would check the vital signs of a congregation.

The congregation would undertake a semiannual review. An outside resource person would be called on for one of the reviews and for asking hard questions. The review would help get at the church's ministry, its needs and the needs of the pastor, how to plan for the future and what traps to avoid.

How do we succeed in urban ministry and avoid burning out our leaders? We need to evaluate the conditions change conditions, develop leadership models that have built-in support systems and see that leaders are adequately taken care of. This may mean that more planning and resources will have to be available for urban congregations.

GOSPEL AT HOME

Theron F. Schlabach

Reducing sketchy data to precise-looking percentages and sharp lines on a graph does not make it more reliable or true. Yet in the study of mission efforts of Mennonite Church people since they joined the modern Protestant missionary movement late in the nineteenth century, the statistical method has seemed the best way to seek out trends they made in North America, via city and rural missions, outpost Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools, and various other evangelism and "outreach."

The kinds of sources available—mainly conference histories, a few other books, district conference newsletters, and a mission directory or two—do not yield up statistics systematically enough for the data to be really complete and consistent; and categorizing information in order to quantify it is the stuff of many ambiguous judgments.

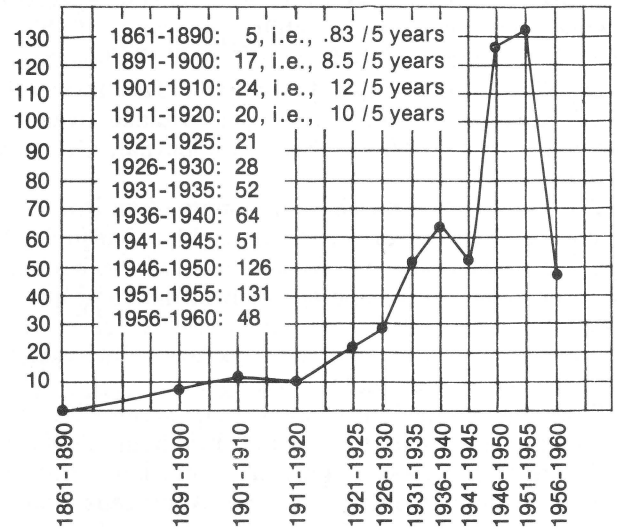
Nevertheless, efforts to gather such data identified 587 locations, in the hundred years 1861-1960, of outreach by Mennonite Church people, their congregations, or their agencies. The information on the 587 is surely too sketchy and "soft" for **definitive** conclusions, yet surely it yielded some **suggestive** ones.

Rates of new starts. A curve showing rates of new starts (Exhibit 1) seems almost dramatic, rising ever more steeply until the early 1950s, then falling suddenly. Yet by

Theron F. Schlabach, who teaches history at Goshen College, has just completed writing a book on the missionary movement in the Mennonite Church. The data in this article are extracted from the chapter on home mission efforts, 1861-1960. The first chapter of Schlabach's study was published in 1975 as a booklet under the title ***A New Rhythm for Mennonites*** (Mennonite Board of Missions, 1975).

another test, the rate from 1911 to the 1950s was fairly steady: roughly speaking, new starts doubled every decade. Moreover, a problem in the data may have

Exhibit 1: Rates of Starting New Places of Work on Home Field (Ave. per 5 years), 1861-1960.



exaggerated the rise and fall, for information is probably increasingly complete for the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s, as more conferences published newsletters, and then somewhat less so in later years, after publication of some of the conference histories. Nevertheless, the general shape of the curve seems entirely plausible, and at least the rising portion fits well some findings of sociologist John A. Hostetler in 1954 and seminarian Linden M. Wenger in 1955.[1]

Why the curve's shape? A few educated guesses might be:

—By the 1920s and early 1930s, people fully nurtured in assumptions, theology, and style of a late-nineteenth-century Mennonite "quickening" (usually known by the more partisan term "awakening") were in practically complete control of congregations and of the entire Mennonite Church.

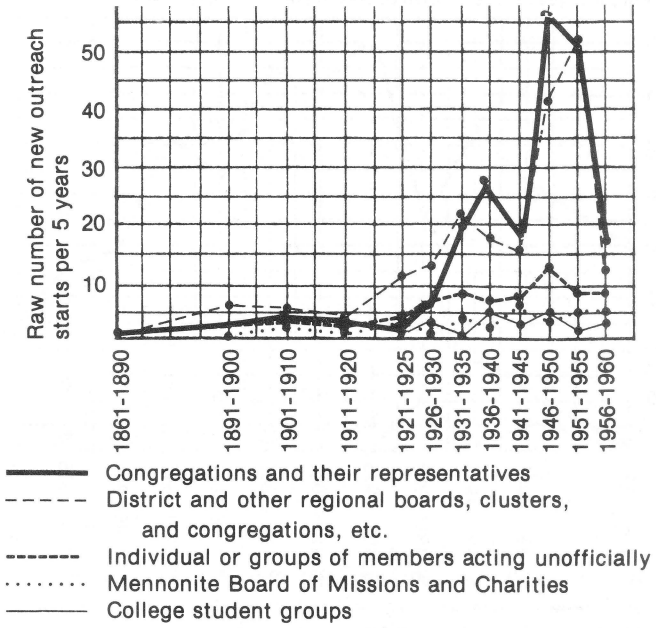
—Organization and leadership: Between 1911 and 1920 roughly two-thirds of the Mennonite Church's district conferences, including some major ones, organized their own district mission boards.

—By the 1930s a slogan of "every congregation an outpost" was on Mennonite lips.

—But by the 1950s, a generation was taking charge for whom the language of the quickening no longer sounded exciting and renewing. And by then Mennonite Church people may well have occupied the places that were most obvious for them to begin outreach work. And maybe sociological change that was making them more like their neighbors was rendering them less sure they had a message to give. Meantime, forms of "service" that do not show up in statistics as "mission"—especially voluntary service and other "indirect" evangelism—were displacing the more "direct" efforts. And just possibly, talk of Anabaptist vision, formulated without strong emphasis on Anabaptists' missionary zeal, and tending (especially among church leadership) to replace language borrowed during the quickening from "evangelical" Protestantism, resulted in less clear calls to mission.

Grass roots. District conference, bishop-district, and other local boards or regional bodies played a much greater role on the home field than did the denomination's general board. And at the peak, congregations' initiative apparently outdid even the regional. Exhibit 2 tells the

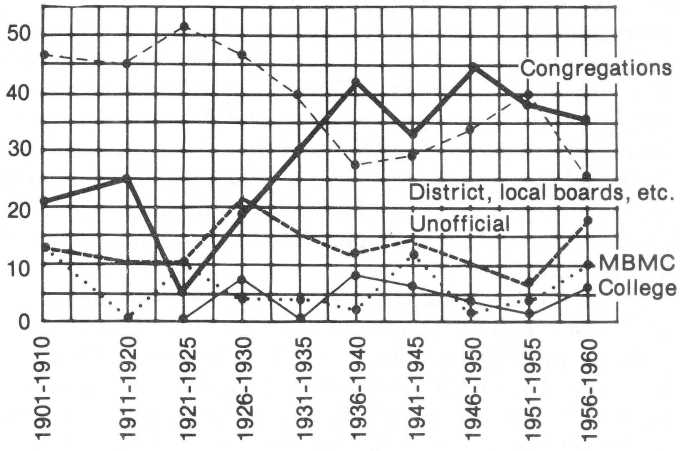
Exhibit 2: Originating Agency or Group by Time. Graphed (Raw numbers).



fuller story, and Exhibit 3 perhaps an even more dramatic one—of sharp rise in **percentage** of initiative coming from congregations, between the early 1920s and the latter 1930s. Why that rise? Quite obviously, whatever was putting total mission starts upward (the quickening coming to fruition, the ideal of every-congregation-an-outpost, or whatever) was affecting congregations most of all. Moreover, as later Exhibits 8 and 9 will show, the rise

Exhibit 3: Originating Agency or Group by Time, Graphed (Percentages)

Percentages of all starts made in a given time period for which there is data on origin.

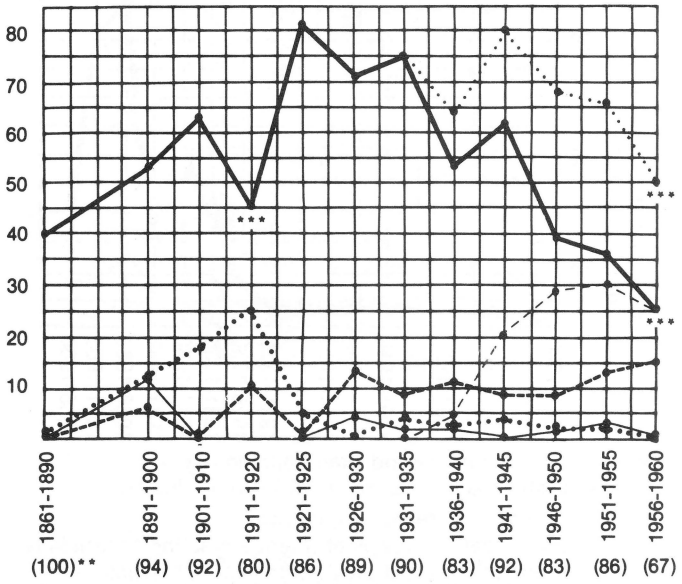


in congregational effort more or less coincided with a new inclination to work in rural settings. Mennonite Church people clearly felt more comfortable working in smaller communities.

Whatever the explanations, and whatever the softness of the data, surely, at their peak, home mission efforts of the Mennonite Church had strong nourishment from the grass roots.

Exhibit 4: Beginning Program by Time, Graphed (Percentages*).

* Percentages of total known outreach starts in the time period.



(100)** (94) (92) (80) (86) (89) (90) (83) (92) (83) (86) (67)

A —— Starts primarily via Sunday schools
B - - - - Via vacation Bible schools
A&B····· Combined data on the two major child-programs
C —— Via benevolence—rescue mission, voluntary service, etc.
D ------ Via "evangelism"—street meetings, cottage meetings, etc.
E ····· Via preaching, little else

** Numbers in this line show percentages—cases on which data as to beginning program as percentage of total known cases in this time period.

***Drop-off probably exaggerated by low percentage of cases on which data as to beginning program exists.

Child evangelism? Exhibit 4 tells a tale—of inclination, despite Mennonites' strong belief in believers' baptism, to begin with programs appealing mainly to children. The reasons, and the rationales given, were various: influence of the American Sunday school movement and of Protestant mission models on the Mennonite Church's quickening, and on the mission movement that came out of it; the ease, no doubt, of attracting children compared with getting adults; and idea, frequently voiced but not so frequently realized, that the way to adults was through their children; and not least, a lingering habit among Mennonites of thinking of faith as a community matter, in a way that made them emphasize children's environment and nurture.

If Mennonites did engage in child evangelism, their approach was much more to sow the seed and nurture children toward conversion than to press hard for quick decisions. They seem rarely to have considered children as depraved, full of awful sins that had quickly to be confessed lest the child be lost. Nor, seemingly, did they follow an upsurge in child evangelism that appeared in certain Protestant circles about the 1930s. Quite definitely, they did follow larger Protestant denominations in adopting the vocation Bible school idea which was taking root about the 1920s, but that fit well enough with the nurture approach. As for more direct child evangelism, Mennonites' reliance on child programs (Exhibit 4) actually dropped off before that new Protestant child evangelism really began to flourish. The International Child Evangelism Fellowship, for instance, was incorporated only in 1937, and began its journal, *Child Evangelism,* only in 1942.

The Mennonite Church's missioners often invoked and acted upon the idea of converting children, at junior high age or even younger. Yet there seems to have been much more gentle nurture than coercion in their rationale and their activity. And by the early 1940s, some of the reflective among them began to ask how child evangelism fit believers' church understandings.

Ethnicity. As Exhibit 5 makes clear, Mennonite Church people directed by far the most of their home-field efforts to White Gentiles—in a greater proportion, apparently, even than the percentage of North Americans who were

Exhibit 5: Ethnic Groups to Which Missions Appealed in their Early Days.

	Number	% of the 524 on which data exists	% of 587
A. White			
1. White only, in some cases due to artificial segregation	412	79	70
2. White, with a few non-Whites, etc.	21	4	4
Total White	**433**	**83**	**74**
B. Black	31	6	5
C. Black and White,			
1. Integrated	9	2	2
2. Segregated and/or clearly approached with different methods	2	0	0
D. Brown (usually Spanish-language)			
1. Mission or work primarily to reach Browns	23	4	4
2. Integrated with White, but usually bilingual services	5	1	1
E. Red (Indian)			
1. Primarily for Reds	4	1	1
2. Connected to work with Whites but separated	1	0	0
F. Jewish			
1. Primarily for Jews	11	2	2
2. Connected to work with Gentiles, usually separated	3	1	1
G. Mix of Black, Brown, and White	1	0	0
H. French-speaking Canadian	1	0	0
Subtotal	**524**		**89**
No date on ethnicity	63		11
TOTAL	**587**		

White Gentiles. A surprising number of the new mission starts occurred from "natural" contacts—among those with whom Mennonite Church people dealt in the course of their daily business, among people who requested the Mennonites to come, etc.—rather than contrived ones. And being mainly a northern and non-urbanized folk,

Exhibit 6: Ethnicity by Time.

		1861-1890 (%)*	1891-1900 (%)	1901-1910 (%)	1911-1920 (%)	1921-1925 (%)	1926-1930 (%)
A-1,	White only (412 cases)	5 (1)	12 (3)	17 (4)	18 (4)	18 (4)	21 (5)
B.	Black (31 cases)	—	1 (3)	—	—	—	1 (3)
D-1.	Brown (23 cases)	—	—	—	—	1 (4)	2 (9)
E.	Red (5 cases)	—	—	—	—	—	—
F.	Jewish (14 cases)	—	—	—	—	—	—
		1931-1935 (%)	**1936-1940 (%)**	**1941-1945 (%)**	**1946-1950 (%)**	**1951-1955 (%)**	**1956-1960 (%)**
A-1.	White only (412 cases)	41 (10)	42 (10)	39 (9)	89 (21)	81 (20)	32 (8)
B.	Black (31 cases)	2 (6)	4 (13)	2 (6)	7 (23)	13 (42)	1 (3)
D-1.	Brown (23 cases)	1 (4)	5 (22)	2 (9)	3 (13)	2 (9)	7 (30)
E.	Red (5 cases)	—	—	—	1 (20)**	2 (40)	2 (40)
F.	Jewish (14 cases)	—	4 (29)	—	3 (21)	7 (50)	—

*i.e., % of known cases directed to that ethnicity, (i.e. of 412, 31, 23, 4, etc.)
**This is the case of work connected with a mission to whites (E-2).

these Mennonites of course had most of their natural contacts with other Whites.

Time-wise, Exhibit 6 indicates that beginnings among White Gentiles emerged somewhat earlier than those among other groups. As for programs used among the different groups, Exhibit 7 shows no really significant group-by-group differences, except that in appeals to Jews, cottage and street and other direct evangelism was the rule instead of the usual kinds of child-oriented programs.

Types of Community. Mennonite Church people began their latter-nineteenth-century mission efforts (although at first not calling them mission) when Virginia Mennonites in the 1850s began to preach among rural mountain neighbors. As their mission movement really

Exhibit 7: Beginning Program by Ethnicity.

		Sunday school Number (%)	Vacation Bible school Number (%)	Benevolence Number (%)	"Evang." Number (%)	Preaching Number (%)
A-1.	White (412 cases)	226 (55)	83 (20)	2 (0)	31 (8)	16 (4)
B.	Black (31 cases)	12 (39)	11 (35)	1 (3)	2 (6)	— —
D-1.	Brown (23 cases)	11 (48)	— —	— —	2 (9)	3 (13)
F.	Jewish	— —	— —	1 (7)	8 (57)	— —

got underway in the 1890s, however, many had the idea that mission meant going to cities. At 1901-1910 in Exhibits 8 and 9, the curves no doubt reflect that latter

Exhibit 8: Kind of Community by Time (Raw numbers*], Graphed.

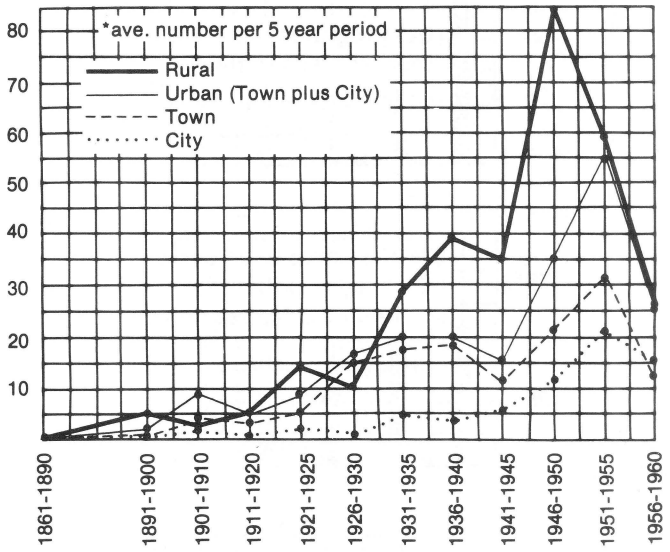


Exhibit 9: Kind of Community by Time (Percentages*), Graphed.

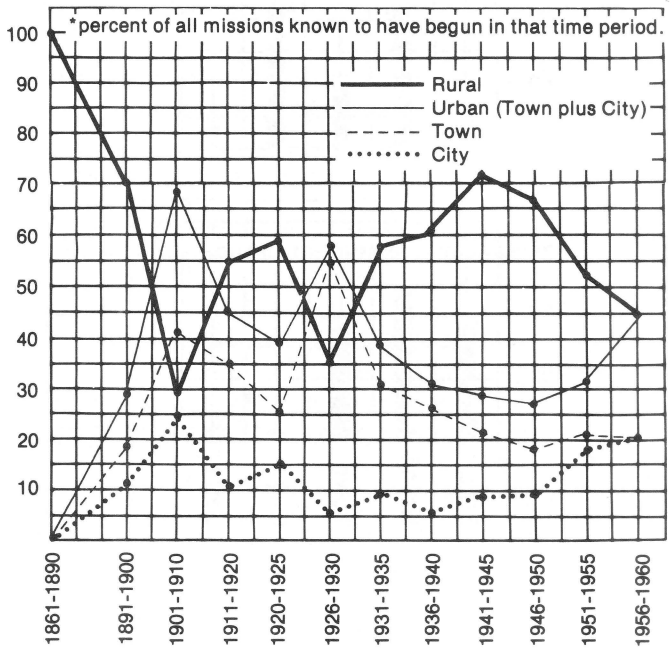
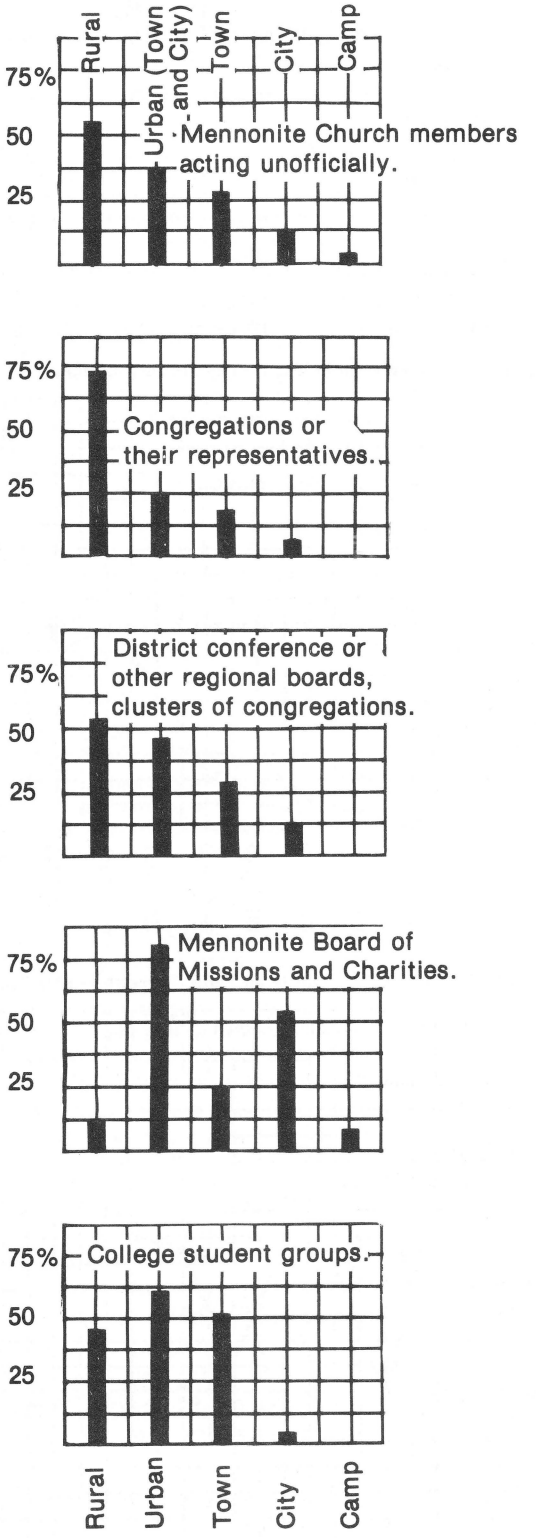


Exhibit 10: Types of Communities to Which the Different Initiating Groups Tended to Go.



notion. Yet mission starts reached their peak only after there had been a strong shift back to rural work, often among sparse populations in out-of-the-way places other denominations had neglected. Even after ample allowance for data error, Exhibits 8 and 9 surely make clear that in the peak years a strong majority of new outreach starts were rural ones.

Exhibit 10, meanwhile, makes clear that the various agencies or groups taking initiative in starting new work established different patterns with regard to the kinds of communities they gravitated to.

Outcomes. Overall, apparently, those 587 mission starts eventually produced results something like those indicated in Exhibit 11. And Exhibit 12 gives at least a rough

Exhibit 11: Outcomes of New Starts.

	Number (out of 587)	Percentage of the 516 on which exist data on outcome	Percentage of 587
A. Became independent (by 1974) and continued			
1. Within 10 years of starting	61	12	10
2. 10-20 years after starting	72	14	12
3. After 20 years	64	12	11
4. Became independent, date unknown	30	6	5
Total	**227**	**44**	**39**
B. Remained a going concern, but dependent on sponsoring agency either as a mission or as an organized congregation	168	33	29
C. Died or discontinued			
1. After having become independent	6	1	1
2. Without becoming independent	94	18	16
Total	100	19	17
D. Consolidated with another	14	3	2
E. Turned over to another denomination	5	1	1
F. Became interdenominational	2	0	0
Subtotal	**516**		**88**
No data on outcome	71		12
TOTAL	**587**		

suggestion of what beginning programs eventually led to what results. Similarly, Exhibit 13 and 14 suggest something of results among different ethnic groups.

Exhibit 15, meanwhile, compares outcomes of starts in different sizes of communities.

Taken at face value, the data seem to show that child-oriented beginnings, whatever their suitability by theological tests, did reasonably well by the pragmatic test of producing independent congregations and other going missions and places of worship (Exhibit 12). Comparing outcomes among different ethnic groups (Exhibit 13) suggests that no Jewish-oriented work produced independent congregations, and no work that frankly integrated Black and White died out—but in both cases

Exhibit 12: Outcomes of Work Begun with Different Programs (Percentages,* by 1974).

Begun Predominantly with	% that became independent congregations and continued.	Additional % that were going concerns although still dependent to significant extent on initiating group or agency	Total % going concerns	% died out or discontinued, a few after becoming independent
A. Sunday School (287 cases)	45%	21%	66%	18%
B. Vacation Bible school (110 cases)	31%**	46%**	77%**	11%**
C. Benevolence (11 cases)***	9%	64%	73%	9%
D. "Evangelism" (53 cases)	34%	34%	68%	17%
E. Preaching (22 cases)	45%	9%	54%	27%

*i.e., % of the number known to have been begun by that program, i.e., of 287, of 110, of 11, etc.

**Difference in results of vacation Bible schools and those of Sunday schools are probably a reflection mainly that vacation Bible school programs were much more recent in 1974, on the average.

***Number of cases surely too few to allow the percentages that follow to be very significant.

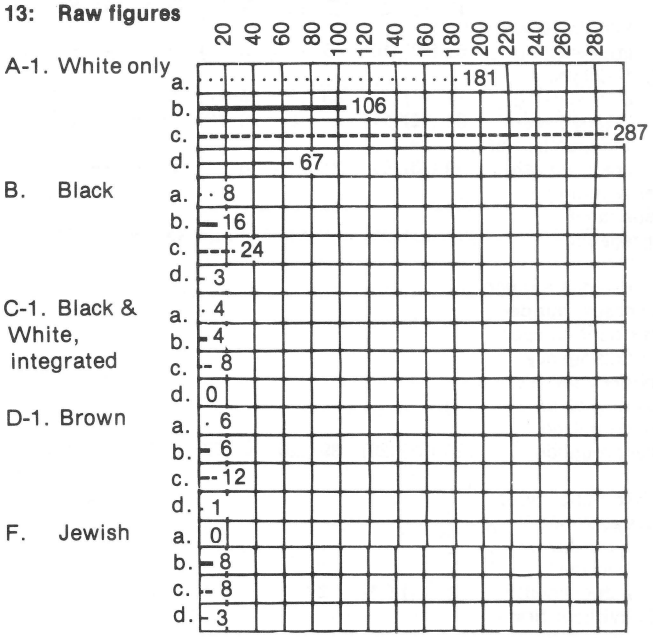
the samples are too small to put much weight on the results. Surely the larger and much more certain conclusion is that the data did not establish significant differences in rates of "success" among different ethnic groups.

But "success" is a dangerous word to apply here. What Mennonite Church member aged 40 or older does not know firsthand at least one congregation (and probably quite a few) that began sometime during those peak decades of activity as "outreach," but now, even though perhaps thriving, hardly includes one surname other than old-line Mennonite or Amish ones? Very often, it would seem, home "missions" became havens for Mennonite Church people looking for something more "spiritual" than their established congregations and other going concerns really represent mission **success**? And how often has mission outreach served the needs of the missioners more than the missioned? Such questions, the numbers do not answer.

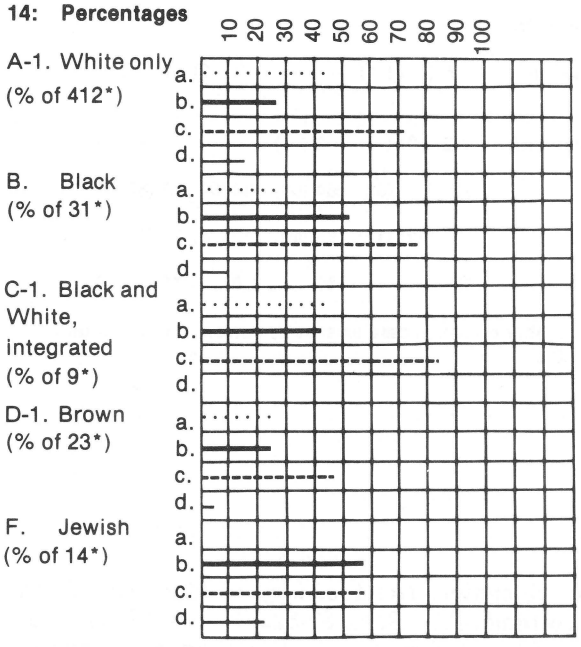
Exhibits 13 and 14: Outcomes, Compared by Ethnicity.

Legend:
a. . . . . : resulting in independent congregations.
b. ——— : going missions and congregations, not independent.
c. - - - - - - - : total "successes"—i.e., a plus b.
d. ——— : starts that died out.

13: Raw figures



14: Percentages



*Number of all known starts appealing to this ethnic group, including some cases for which no data exists as to outcome.

Exhibit 15: Outcomes, Compared by Type of Community
(Percentages are of all known starts in the type of community indicated).

	Total	(% of 516*)	(% of 587)	Rural	(% of 339)	Town	(% of 150)	City	(% of 71)	Camp	(% of 6)
A. Became independent (by 1974) and continued											
1. Within 10 years after starting	61	(12)	(10)	46	(14)	8	(5)	3	(4)	—	—
2. 10-20 years after starting	72	(14)	(12)	33	(10)	26	(17)	5	(7)	1	(17)
3. After 20 years	64	(12)	(11)	27	(8)	29	(19)	4	(6)	1	(17)
4. Independent at unknown date	30	(6)	(5)	21	(6)	6	(4)	1	—	—	
Total resulting in independent congregations	**227**	**(44)**	**(39)**	**127**	**(37)**	**69**	**(46)**	**13**	**(18)**	**2**	**(33)**
B. Remained a going concern, but dependent on sponsoring agency either as a mission or as an unorganized congregation	168	(33)	(29)	89	(29)	40	(27)	34	(48)	1	(17)
C. Died out or were discontinued											
1. After having become independent	6	(1)	(1)	2	(1)	1	(1)	1	(1)	—	—
2. Without first becoming independent	94	(18)	(16)	55	(16)	23	(15)	9	(13)	3	(50)
Total died out or discontinued	**100**	**(19)**	**(17)**	**57**	**(17)**	**24**	**(16)**	**10**	**(14)**	**3**	**(50)**
D. Consolidated with another mission, or congregation	14	(3)	(2)	9	(3)	2	(1)	2	(3)	—	—
E. Turned over to another denomination	5	(1)	(1)	—	—	3	(2)	1	(1)	—	—
F. Became inter-denominational	2	(0)	(0)	2	(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Subtotals	**516**	*	**(88)**	**284**	**(84)**	**138**	**(92)**	**60**	**(85)**	**6**	**(100)**
No data	71	(12)	(12)	55	(16)	12	(8)	11	(15)	—	—
TOTALS	**587**			**339**		**150**		**71**		**6**	

*516 is the number on which data exist as to outcome, in the total sample of 587.

Footnote

1. John A. Hostetler, *The Sociology of Mennonite Evangelism* (Scottdale, PA, 1954), 82-82a; Linden M. Wenger, "A Study of Rural Missions in the Mennonite Church" (Th. M. thesis, Union Theological Seminary (Richmond VA), 217, 224.

THREE CURRENT MISSION AUDIOVISUALS

by
Mennonite Board of Missions

PARTNERS IN MISSION interviews Alan and Eleanor Kreider, missionaries with Mennonite Board of Missions in modern, pagan England. That country of such missionary greats as John Wesley and George Whitfield now boasts a church attendance of less than five percent of its national population. (By comparison, church attendance in Russia is 15 percent.) Even those who do attend church experience a spoken rather than a lived religion. In this dynamic interview, Alan and Eleanor talk about their attempts to "live" their Christian faith at the Mennonite Centre in London, England. Color, 16mm motion picture, 15 minutes.

GOOD NEWS UPON THE SOIL OF AFRICA introduces Christian brothers and sisters from African Independent Churches. Mennonite missionaries have had opportunity to get acquainted with and work among some of these churches since the late 1950s when Ed and Irene Weaver went to southeastern Nigeria in West Africa. A 16½-minute slide/sound presentation by Alice and Willard Roth.

BROTHERS AFTER ALL introduces us to some Navajo Christians at Black Mountain and Blue Gap missions in Arizona. We see close-up how they try to extend Christ's kingdom where they live and work. Our Navajo brothers and sisters, however, are faced with many unique problems—pressure of Navajo experience, allure of white man's "things," struggles with reservation education and health care, and a government which deals with native Americans on a "relief economy" basis. A 20-minute color filmstrip with sound cassette.

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MISSIONARY CONGREGATIONS

An Editorial Comment

Well aware that the great state churches of Europe were in decline, ecumenical leaders in the 1960s undertook a study of "the missionary structure of the congregation." They assumed that the only way to arrest deterioration was to recover the church's sense of missionary purpose. But it would not be enough merely to recover vision. Existing structures had to be examined and then changed to meet the needs of the new day. The titles of official reports and books written by individuals related to that study process help pinpoint themes and ideas that guided them: THE CHURCH FOR OTHERS, THE CHURCH FOR THE WORLD, WHERE IN THE WORLD, WHAT IN THE WORLD, THE CHURCH INSIDE OUT, and PLANNING FOR MISSION. The church needed to be turned from a preoccupation with itself to genuine concern for the world. Some of the issues and questions which emerged are pertinent to us today:

- The church suffers from "morphological fundamentalism." In simple language this means the church is unwilling to tinker with time-honored forms and organization. When churches do reorganize, they do so with a view to greater administrative efficiency and a streamlining of structures rather than making organization serve the real purpose for which the church exists. Leaders of the Protestant Reformation challenged the Roman church and insisted on returning to a "biblical fundamentalism," but in the process they restored the ancient European form of the medieval **corpus christianum.** Rather than applying their new biblical insights to a thorough reformation of the church, they fell back on the old traditions at crucial points.
- The world must set the agenda. For too long the church has had a "come" structure. It must become a "go" structure. Rather than the church insisting that the world must come to the church on the church's terms the church must become the humble servant. This slogan contains an element of truth. We must stop trying to answer questions nobody is asking. The church is called to identify **with** people in their hurts and ills. But this slogan has also been used to say that the church's task was simply to blend its efforts into existing political and social agencies, thus undergirding efforts to correct and improve what is already being done.
- Religion is essentially a private matter. No matter how eloquently the churches pronounce on social problems of the day, they do not have the will nor the means to bring about change. Religion is voluntary and individual. The churches cannot engineer genuine change.
- Should we speak about "the missionary congregation?" The first phrasing suggests that the church is multifaceted. One characteristic of the church is that it is missionary. We must then ask: what special structure is called for in fulfilling the missionary task of the church? The second phrasing insists that mission is of the essence of the church. There can be no church apart from mission. It is superfluous to speak about church and mission as two separate realities.
- People disagreed over the kind of remedy required to deal with structure. **Reformers** believed that the primary task was to renew the existing church from within. **Radicals** were committed to a basic reshaping of old forms and the creation of new forms to serve the mission of the church. **Revolutionaries** called for death of old forms in order that mission might create the new forms it needs.

The Church of England has an Urban Church Project at work on the question of what adaptations it must make to fit into an urban world. David Wasdell, project director, offers a preliminary report in the October 1977 *International Review of Mission.* He notes that most missiological attention is still focused on the developing nations of the Third World, but insists that "the missiology of the future will be concerned not with church growth in emergent cultures but with mission strategies in the established cities of post-industrial society." No matter what changes are made at the denominational level, the future of the church depends on the local congregation—its vision, its strategies, its effectiveness. The English parish church has proven, however, to be remarkably resistant to change. All of the discussion of "the missionary structure of the church" in the 1960s simply did not penetrate to the parish level. Testimony to this fact can be found in North America as well. In the last decade mainline denominations have lost in membership notwithstanding frequent reorganization and mergers at the denominational level.

The parish church originated as a missionary structure suited to the close-knit, feudal, agricultural community of medieval times. For hundreds of years as the population grew and became more concentrated in cities, people's religious needs were met by building more and more parish churches. The Church of England study has found, however, that the size of the traditional parish congregation—consisting of holy man, holy building, and worshipers—reaches a maximum size which does not correlate with the number of residents in the parish. This saturation point varied somewhat from one parish to another depending on mobility, class structure, local history, and local church leadership and organizational patterns. But in parishes with a population above 2,000 people, none of these elements made any difference.

While the average parish congregation had 175 active participants, the most common size was 65 people. There seems to be a solid sociological explanation for this fact. A

congregation can function reasonably well as a single unit until it reaches a membership of 65 people. To grow beyond that point requires formation of sub-groups and secondary structures. A congregation needs to take into account the role of primary groups (up to 12 people) and secondary groups (up to 66 people) when thinking about its structure.

The Church of England study notes that a new congregation founded on the traditional parish model may experience rapid initial growth but hit a peak within two years. It may experience some decline before finding its equilibrium. Once it establishes equilibrium it subtly changes from missionary congregation to staid parish church. It now has a "club" mentality rather than missionary openness. It is preoccupied with maintenance instead of mission. "The task of the congregation is gradually redefined in terms of building maintenance, remnant theology or representative activity. The institutional expression of the body of Christ carries within it the incarnation of its own antithesis and communicates contradiction," according to Wasdell. The church has now unwittingly set itself up for collaboration with the world on the world's terms. No longer does it witness to the world concerning the Word of God. Instead it has a tacit understanding with the world that it will keep God safely confined within the four walls of the church building.

How does the church react to this reality of the bankruptcy of the traditional parish? A large number of people simply deny that there is a problem. They neither understand the church as a missionary reality nor wish to have the tradition changed. Unfortunately, much that has passed for **renewal** during the past two decades has only served to confirm congregations in their problem by centering attention on the personal. Too few people have related renewal to mission. And you cannot deal with renewal in mission without tackling the problem of structure.

Another group of people acknowledges that the problem is real but insists that we cannot actually change the traditional approach. The only way out is to try harder to found new congregations as people move or the population grows.

A third group refuses to settle for either denial or "soldiering on." They believe that structures are intended to be subservient to mission and members of the church must address themselves deliberately to the challenges before the church. This requires that we begin with first principles. What are the marks of the missionary congregation?

First, the missionary congregation is a fellowship where people discover and experience the meaning of community. The urban world fragments the individual, the family, the church, the neighborhood. The missionary congregation is committed to salvation and recognizes that this is only possible within the community of faith under Christ's lordship.

In the second place, the church is a community of gifts. The priesthood of all believers must be emphasized and practiced. Leadership patterns in the traditional church have limitations. The chief weakness is that it produces leader-centered congregations with the result that the gifts of many members are never recognized and brought into service. The ability of the church to adapt to widely varying social conditions in the future will depend on the extent to which it begins to function as a community of gifts. The problem of "burned-out" pastors is a direct result of the traditional pattern.

The third mark of the missionary congregation is that it is dedicated to mission rather than self-preservation. These two impulses cannot coexist. The congregation cannot preserve its life and thereby save it. The congregation committed to preserving itself has a covenant with death. It thereby announced to the world that it may be safely disregarded.

Fourth, the missionary church insists that it will use its structures in the service of mission rather than binding the church to structures, forms, and traditions. A big challenge awaiting the church is to learn to use structure creatively and redemptively. Mission requires structure, and we need to discern both the limitations and possibilities in each situation.

One of the most encouraging signs in recent years has been the ferment and restlessness people have felt about the inadequacies of the traditional form of church in the urban setting. The freedom to experiment and improvise is a gift of the Spirit. Groups like Church of the Savior have perceived clearly the need to reject self-preservation and make mission the heart of the church's existence. Much remains to be done as we consider the call to make a new thrust in urban missions.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

NO MORE CRUSADES

Charles R. Taber

A crusade is an exciting thing, isn't it? The word conjures up for us (westerners, that is) colorful visions of knighthood in full flower, of Ivanhoe and Richard the Lion Hearted and Frederick Red-Beard and perhaps of Saint Louis. It evokes feelings of high adventure and derring-do (all in the service of Christ, of course), of victory and conquest.

But isn't that precisely the trouble with the term--that it calls up military images, triumphalistic images of violence and war, at total variance with the character of the Prince of Peace and with the true strategy and tactics of his Kingdom?

Historically, the Crusades were one of the most sordid and despicable actions ever committed by Christians, and that is saying a lot. Others at various times since Constantine have used the world's sword allegedly in the interests of the Kingdom, and the annals of missionary history run red with the blood of "converts" as well as with that of missionaries.

But for sheer scope and villainy, the Crusades stand out. The ranks of the Crusaders were an incongruous mixture of naive idealists, religious fanatics, political opportunists, adventurers of all social classes, mercenaries, and just plain gangsters. For two hundred years, wave after wave of "Christians" ravaged, or tried to ravage, whole areas of the Middle East. Their tactics were plunder, rape (literally), arson, massacre, torture, and enslavement. Nor did they confine their attentions to the Muslim Saracens: on the way to the Holy Land, they devastated Christian Constantinople for practice. Surely it should not have to be said that all of this was hardly a service to Christ and his Kingdom, nor that it in fact contradicted diametrically all that the Kingdom stands for.

As a result of the Crusades, hundreds of millions of people are almost totally impervious to the gospel of Jesus Christ; is it any wonder? I am not suggesting that if there had been no Crusades, Muslims would now welcome the gospel with open arms, though that is not an impossibility; but at least there would not be the fiercely adamant rejection nor the militant hostility and resentment that immeasurably complicate efforts to evangelize Muslims today. (As an aside, it seems to me that many of the specially resistant peoples are resistant chiefly because of the unchristian attitudes and actions of Christians; witness the Jews, many post-christian westerners, and many Marxists.)

But, you say, all that is 700 years old; why beat a horse that is not only dead but was buried that long ago? The answer is that as far as Muslims are concerned, the Crusades happened yesterday; by and large, the Christian churches have shown few signs of repentance; and to cap it all off, Christians persist in using the hateful old term to label some of their present activities. Why should Muslims let down their guard when Christians give all the signs of approving what their forefathers did?

I therefore urge (a) that we make strong, explicit, and public expressions of our horror at what the Crusaders did, and (b) that we banish the word crusades from our vocabulary. It is not an honorable word, and we should not use it as if it were. For the sake of Christ's Kingdom, let us have no more crusades!

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PERPETUATING AN ILLUSION

For a thousand years when Christendom was sealed off by Islam from effective contact with the rest of the world, and was contracting, not expanding, it lived in almost total isolation from non-Christian cultures.

In this situation the illusion that the age of missions is over became almost an integral part of Christianity. The perpetuation of that illusion is revealed in our normal church life, in the forms of congregations and parishes, in our conception of the ministry, and in the ordinary consciousness of the churchmen.

Our *theological curricula bear eloquent testimony to this illusion.* Our church history is normally taught not as the story of the triumphs of the Gospel but as the story of the internal quarrels of the church; our systems of dogmatics are directed toward the non-Christian faith. The training of the ministry is not for a mission to the world but almost exclusively for the pastoral care of established Christian congregations.

—Lesslie Newbigin
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Contents

The Missionary Stance of the Church in 1 Peter, George R. Brunk, III
Jesus at Nazareth: Jubilee and the Missionary Message (Luke 4:16-30), Don Blosser
A Theology of Mission in Outline, Mennonite Board of Missions
Letter to the Editor, David A. Shank

THE MISSIONARY STANCE OF THE CHURCH IN 1 PETER

George R. Brunk, III

Just as Saul's armour was unfit for God's servant David, so also not all forms of mission and witness are appropriate for God's servant people. Too much of the search for right method and successful technique is generated by imitation of secular propaganda and publicity patterns. This may take place in ignorance of the implications or in unconscious compensation for the lack of a genuine Christian spirit that seeks out its own fitting form of expression. In any event the mission of the church is debased by a style of mission and evangelism in which the medium (form) is not in harmony with the message (spirit).

The small epistle of 1 Peter illustrates this principle both explicitly and implicitly. The writer expressly advises his readers that in the defense of the gospel, "do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear" (3:15, 16). Elsewhere in the epistle the author extolls these particular virtues as essential characteristics of the follower of Christ. As the context clearly shows, the power of witness is contingent upon the consistency of **what** is defended with **how** it is defended (3:16b).

The epistle of 1 Peter invites consideration as a statement of missionary strategy for another reason. The letter addresses a minority community in a hostile atmosphere. The church is a pilgrim people that lives most keenly the distinction between a believing fellowship and the unbelieving society. More and more this is the context in which the contemporary mission of the church must be carried out. The passing of colonial securities, the increase of political confusion and revolution, and the reawakening of non-Christian religions are creating a world in which the church finds increasing identity with first-century believers.

In spite of the difficult circumstances, 1 Peter reveals an inextinguishable optimism about the penetrating power of the gospel proclaimed by a faithful church. The writer does not describe a high-profile form of mission. In fact, with the exception of the classical text of 2:9, this New Testament writing is not used as a basis for missiological concerns. This is because we fail to appreciate a low-profile mission that seeks to integrate mission and life-style and because we are not aware that many believers today live under conditions that preclude a high-profile mission. The epistle makes the significant point that "low-profile" mission can at the same time be "high powered" mission. The purpose of this essay is to uncover the understanding of mission which determines this viewpoint and to disclose its unique dynamics.

The Wider Angle of Vision

The pastoral letter of Peter contains a theological perspective that is both developed and incisive. Several dimensions of this vision of faith are crucial for our study.

1. The central themes of faith have a marked eschatological character. Salvation is primarily future (1:5) and progressive (2:2). The gift of the new birth is preeminently the gift of hope (1:3). The whole of Christian existence is conditioned by hope. The expression, "set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13) illustrates the future orientation of grace in the context of an appeal to appropriate behavior. This suggests that a clear vision of the goal of redemption inspires obedience to the will of God. The eschatological hope becomes a direct norm for

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present living in the exhortation to bless because, as a believer, blessing is the anticipated outcome (3:9). Here the motivation to transformed living is: be now what you hope to become. Hope strengthens the people of God in their present suffering (1:6; 4:13; 5:10). Therefore, a living hope both leads to an alternate life-style in the midst of a society trapped in the past (1:18) and present (4:4), and at the same time steels the nerve for the conflict that results between the old and the new. As we will see more fully, Peter sees the mission of the church rising like a spontaneous flame ignited by the friction between a world that is passing and another that is coming. In this case the awareness of the end (1:20; 4:7) does not merely excite the redeemed community to "work for the night is coming," i.e., work fast for the time is brief. Eschatology is part and parcel of the missionary stance of the church in its very nature and every action.

2. The integral character of theology and ethics is also a conspicuous feature. The author moves freely between the saving action of God for believers and the saved action of the believer before God. In all instances where the saving benefit of the cross is stated (1:18; 2:24; 3:18), the setting is one of ethical exhortation. The work of the crucified Lord is the ground of upright behavior. In a form similar to the Pauline mode of expression, the relationship between the indicative of the saving fact and the imperative of righteous act is the key linking word—therefore (see 1:13). The action of God on behalf of believers is the foundation of all holy living. On the other hand there are indications in the epistle that obedience itself is the basis for new actualization of Christian being (1:22). Perhaps this is the way to understand the enigmatic affirmation that suffering contributes to the cessation from sin (4:1). Suffering, as the consequence of righteous living, marks out in the believer an even greater separation from unrighteousness. The integral nature of Christian existence extends also from ethics to mission. In Peter it is the church suffering because of its uncompromised holy conduct that has a missionary impact upon society (2:12, 15; 3:1, 2, 16). This observation leads to another essential consideration.

3. The church as portrayed in the epistle lives in an unrelaxed, unresolved tension between distinctiveness and involvement in relation to the world. On the one hand the right doing of the believer is so counter to pagan behavior that the latter reacts negatively (4:4). Right-doing is treated as wrongdoing (2:12). Those who represent God are a distinct people (2:9). Thus a counter community is set up in the midst of the general social structure: a distinctive people with a distinctive life. On the other hand, this special people deliberately maintains its involvement in the "Gentile" structure. They are among the nonbelievers (2:12) and recognize the civil order as applicable to themselves (2:13). Apparently they are not expected to set up counter economic systems but participate in the larger system (2:18). This dual movement is the key to faithfulness. On one side the result is suffering; on the other it is evangelistic penetration. The relaxation of distinctiveness would avoid suffering. The relaxation of involvement would compromise evangelism and service. Either way the integrity of the vision would be lost. Now what is so significant is that Peter sees evangelism as one dimension of the dynamic encounter between a special people and a hostile world. The progress of the gospel takes place in the crisis triggered by the nonconformist, believing fellowship confronting the world. The crisis is inevitable. The evangelistic result, however, is dependent upon the consistency and perseverance of the distinctive way of life of that fellowship. The kind of mission here envisioned is powerful but costly. It demands a high quality of discipleship, a high commitment to engagement, and a high tolerance of suffering. Peter seems to demand both nonconformity and contemporaneity in the church's relation to society. The church must take a stand for God over against the world, but that stance must speak prophetically to that world in which the church presently lives.

The Specific Aspects of Mission

One might well speak of mission in our epistle as a quite natural aspect of being the authentic people of God in the world. Mission and evangelism are not sharply distinguishable parts of the church's life; they do not constitute a special program or strategy in isolation from other activities. They are two facets of Christian existence. In particular, mission can be said to begin at the place where Christian behavior becomes responsive, productive activity in relationships with neighbor and society. This interaction has several aspects.

1. Demonstration

It is characteristic of 1 Peter to speak of the behavior of Christians in their relationships with those who do not obey the word (3:1) as upright conduct. Among the Gentiles, or pagans, they "maintain good conduct" (2:12) cf. 3:16). Even in the domestic setting "reverent and chaste behavior" is the key to redemptive relationship (3:1, 2). The latter case is of special interest. The example is that of the wife relating to the husband. The adornment used to impress the mate is not outward artificiality but inner spirit allowed to blossom in action. Adornment as witness—the metaphor is apt! (cf. 2 Cor 2:15). This is not an ethic repressive of human nature but creative of righteousness not only in oneself but also in others!

In 2:13-18 the writer develops the general case of good conduct among the Gentiles under the concept of servanthood. The vocabulary of subjection, honor, fear, and love in human relations expresses the essential commitment to enjoy Christian freedom in service to God (2:16). Since service-in-love is the basic feature of relational ethics both within the brotherhood (1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8-11) and outside, the characteristic Petrine unity of ethics and evangelism again comes into focus. Peter sees service to one's fellowmen as the complement to evangelism.

The evangelistic impact of "good conduct" begins in the act of observing [out of] the good deeds (2:12). Observation leads to understanding. The ultimate outcome is either winning to the faith (3:1) or putting to silence or shame (2:15; 3:16). The epistle carefully notes the kind of behavior that elicits such a response.

Christian living is impressive for its uniqueness,

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persistence, and consistency. The peculiar style of life is rooted in the source of that life: it is God-like (theological) in essence (1:16); it is Christological in shape (2:21 ff.); it is eschatological in power (3:9), that is, the life of total blessing is motivated out of the expectation that the ultimate bliss will have just that form. Be now what you hope to become! The witness to this novel, "futuristic" life is protected from ruinous compromise by persistent zeal in right (3:13) and by rigorous consistency because even one's form of defense must reflect the same character as one's other conduct—with gentleness, reverence, and clear conscience (3:15c).

Peter reflects in his own way the "signs" theology of the wider New Testament. Jesus and his followers witness to the divine action — the power of the kingdom — among them and through them. In Acts 14:3 this is keenly referred to as God's own witness to the human word of witness. Interestingly however, Peter does not accent the miraculous aspect of signs and wonders even though he apparently knows that is possible (2:9?). Rather, the power to live the kingdom life is itself the greatest sign and wonder. The criterion of a demonstrative sign is not its "supernatural" appearance, but its "unnatural" particularity—it points to the intrusion of a new order of things into the "natural," present order.

The epistle, as the rest of the New Testament, points to the essential role of demonstration in mission. The inevitability, the credibility, and the clarity of the gospel message are conditioned on it. For Peter we would not be too wide of the mark to say that "the messenger is the message."

2. Explanation

The natural correlate of demonstration is explanation. Explanation presupposes something that already is present and known but not understood. The word of explanation points to the act or fact that is demonstrated. It builds on the strengths of demonstration in mission and adds its own. First, it avoids the tendency to manipulate by overpowering intellect or impassioned rhetoric. Proclamation of the gospel in isolation from the gospel's power depends entirely on sheer verbal power. Second, explanation witness sets the stage for learning to take place. The interest and curiosity of the observer-listener is a given. The implied openness is the first step to understanding. The witness takes the offensive even when forced to appear before the world's judges.

Such is just the case in 1 Peter. The believer may be called to account for the hope of the community of faith (3:15). (Note that a comparison of hope in v. 15 and righteousness in vv. 13 and 14 underscores the point that the demonstrated life reflects the expected life-to-come.) It is true that is some instances the word of explanation is dispensable (3:1). The text uses the point to emphasize the primacy of demonstration. Elsewhere the author implies that verbal defense easily degenerates into counterproductive unfaithfulness (2:22, 23; 3:15c, 16a). Yet explanation remains essential both because others may require it and because demonstration needs it as a complement.

The nature of the gospel is such that its meaning, in terms of its transcendent points of reference, is not self-evident. Peter does not develop this point explicitly. The passages dealing with the verbal announcement of the message imply it (1:12, 25; 2:9; and see below). Furthermore, a correct understanding of the classical text in 2:9 may affirm the fact. The Old Testament precedent would suggest that the wonderful deeds are not exclusively the great acts of God in antiquity; they include the acts of God right up to the present moment of the children of God (see the Psalms). The text defines this active God in the subsequent clauses in terms of His acts for the Petrine churches—from darkness to light, from "nobody" to a "somebody" people. To declare the behavioral pattern of this God is to explain the demonstrable effects of His mercy in a new people whose task it is precisely to do that declaring. But this leads into a new focus point.

3. Disclosure

The divine deeds in the contemporary moment are certainly related to the great central deeds of God in the long history of revelation. The latter events and their interpretation in Scripture serve as the norm by which the believers of all times interpret the contemporary deeds of God among them and in their world. Without this key no proper basis would exist for the explanation of the current deeds of God. Explanation needs both the present event to which to point and the comparison and analogy from the past. The expression, "declare the wonderful deeds of [God]," points to this, not by distinguishing these two aspects, but by emphasizing the equally important fact that the process is a continuous line of unfolding action and proclamation. Consequently, the contemporary witness is linked solidly to the chain of divine purpose that unites all history and gives the new people roots (2:10.)

The reader can detect the two aspects in sequence by noting the emphasis in chapter one on the proclaimed word centered in the prophetic promise and its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Jesus (1:10, 11, 23-25), the all-inclusive reference to "wonderful deeds" in 2:9, and finally the specific demonstration-explanation form of witness in the 2:11 ff. section.

The crucial role of the foundational acts of God is reflected in the concept of canon, i.e., Scripture. For Peter it was the Old Testament as promise (1:10) plus the apostolic proclamation of Christ (1:12b); for us it is simply the whole of Scripture. Scripture interprets contemporary life in the light of the acts of God for our salvation.

At the heart this is a function of disclosure. This is more than explanation. It is informational in the deepest sense, for in it God reveals Himself and His will. The paragraph, 1:10-12, states this clearly by attributing to the Spirit the prophetic insight (11) and the apostolic announcement (12) regarding the action of God in Christ. Without this essential datum, this given, no light would be shed on human existence. What Heidegger said of language in general—it is a disclosure event—is eminently true of revealed truth. The word received is like a clearing in the forest where light breaks through. The figure of light and darkness is, of course, a basic biblical motif. Peter uses it in the key passage defining God's missionary people (2:9). This people has been called from darkness to light. Here is

expressed that disclosing power of the good news that comes from without (calls) but penetrates within (born anew, 1:23).

Thus the place of proclamation—announcing the facts of salvation—is secured in the missionary life of the church. These data must be fed into the mixture of demonstration and explanation in order to be the catalyst of genuine faith. The life-containing, life-preserving quality of this word is underscored by our epistle (1:23-25). The disclosing power of these words, the gospel message, endures through time and place. It is irreplaceable.

4. Visitation

The focus on disclosure highlights the divine involvement in mission. This note is intensified in the concept of visitation. The day of visitation signifies the time when the Gentiles observe the good conduct of believers and acknowledge God ("glorify God"). In line with prophetic usage in the Bible, this term can refer either to an intermediate or the final occasion when God intervenes in human affairs in judgment or vindication. Which is it here? Does Peter see it as a moment of crisis in life or as the time of final judgment?

In light of the obvious dependence on Matthew 5:16 and the parallel expression in 3:3 where the husband is "won" (the same unusual Greek word is used for "see" in both contexts in Peter), the balance of evidence points to the moment of divine intervention in the course of life. A parallel would then be the observation of Jesus that Jerusalem had not known the time of her visitation by the Messiah (Lk. 19:44). The reference would be to those moments when God breaks through the wall of human indifference and the individual or nation is confronted with spiritual need. This is the day of opportunity for salvation.

The people of God in mission who are aware of God's way with His world will take a dim view of any stance that presumes to "conclude" the evangelistic call by using persuasive gimmicks or pressure tactics. Recognition of God's sovereignty and respect for the individual's readiness are important to serving as midwife in true spiritual birth. Furthermore, one must note that the day of witness is not necessarily the time of opportunity for emerging faith. The implication of Peter's words is clear: live an open and consistent life before unbelievers so that whenever the opportune time arrives, the "other life" of the Christian will point the searching individual to the better way. If the Christan community's "visit of witness" is to connect with the divine visitation, it must be made with great sensitivity. On the other hand it frees the community from false guilt in assuming that it bears responsibility for success.

5. Apologetic

2 Peter pays brief attention to one other aspect of mission. The role of the church in mission is also that of unmasking and judging the senselessness of unrighteousness. Doing right "should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (2:15). Those who revile good behavior in Christ "may be put to shame" by the believer's nonvengeful response to abuse (3:16). This example relates evangelism and the peace witness. We are probably to understand these responses of the nonbeliever as occurring in the present life.

The picture is one of a mix of gentle means and aggressive impact. Witness is not smooth dialogue but debate. The world calls the church to account and finds itself shamed and wrongheaded—an anticipation of God's call of the world to account (4:5). Here is truly a form of almighty meekness. Given the minority status of these churches in a time of suffering, the call to fearless (3:14) action is striking. Even then it is no occasion for heady pride; judgment stands first over the household of God (4:17).

Given the context of the statement in 2:15 which refers to the political authorities one might well speak of a political witness. Interestingly, here that witness is done in the demonstration of subjection. On the other hand as noted, the legal setting implied in 3:15 is one in which the tables are turned and the believer confronts his accusers—still in a spirit of reverence. In this instance the world initiates the confrontation. The believers' life-style causes irritation (cf. 4:4). One might venture the guess that Peter, if he addressed the church today, would say that what is at issue in "political witness" is not so much whether the gospel is relevant to the political arena or whether the Christian has a right or duty to speak there, but whether the church is faithful enough to provoke being called to account, out of hostility or perhaps admiration, for the transformed life of messianic discipleship.

Conclusion

1 Peter is not a comprehensive treatment of the biblical themes of mission. Yet it remains remarkably complete in its all-too-brief assertions of mission as an integral part of the church. Mission is thoroughly at home in true Christian existence as the people of God in the world. In this epistle the missionary stance reflects the self-understanding of the believers church: the voluntary church of disciples embraces the way of separation and holy living and finds in its tension with the world not a threat to mission but its heartbeat.

JESUS AT NAZARETH: JUBILEE AND THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE (Luke 4:16-30)

By Don Blosser

In Luke's gospel, the public ministry of Jesus opens with an appearance in the synagogue at Nazareth (4:16-30). It is significant that Luke should select this event, for it does not in fact "begin" the ministry of Jesus. He had been preaching in the synagogues of Galilee and had already developed a rather substantial reputation (4:14-15). This Nazareth incident must have had special importance for Luke to have used it in this way, because Luke wrote with a specific purpose in mind, and he selected his materials carefully (1:1-4). This event is given programmatic significance, laying the foundation for the rest of the gospel story.

This account is not without its problems. Some of the language and the sentence structure do not match Luke's normal fluent Greek. Several rather specific, yet diverse themes seem to be thrown together, leading some to believe that Luke created the story from a variety of different synagogue appearances in order to make a particular theological point. As scholars identified these themes[1], only rarely did anyone ask, "What is the unifying element which holds this story together?" It was assumed that there was no such element, thus it must be a Lukan fabrication.

This study—which assumes that the event actually did happen—seeks, first, to show that there is a unifying element to the story, and second, to see what insights this theme provides for our understanding of the missionary message.

The Year of Jubilee

When Jesus came to Nazareth, He was invited to read the prophet lesson in the synagogue service. The text which He read (Is. 61:1-2) provides the initial key for understanding the event. The references to "good news to the poor; release to the captives; liberty to the oppressed; the acceptable year of the Lord" all have unmistakable connections with the jubilee. Thus, Isaiah 61 directs us further back in Israelite history to Leviticus 25.

At that time Israel was standing at a crucial point in its history. Basically a nomadic, wandering people, they had just been freed from slavery and were now approaching the promised land, where they were to begin a new way of life in agriculture. This new way of life required new laws. Included in these laws were regulations for sabbath year (seventh year) and jubilee year (forty-ninth year) observance. The basic elements provided that:

1. Every sabbath year the land was to lie fallow (Lev 25:1-7; Ex 23:10-11).
2. In this sabbath year all persons who had been sold into slavery (normally due to debts) were to be set free (Ex 21:2; Deut 15:12 & 18).
3. All debts among Israelites were to be canceled (Deut 15:1-11).
4. The seventh sabbath year was designated as a year of jubilee. All the usual sabbath regulations were observed and all land was restored to the original owners (Lev 25:8ff).

There are few references to the jubilee in the Old Testament (Num 36; Ruth 3-4; Jer 34; etc.), indicating that observance was sporadic at best. During the Babylonian captivity there was a temporary resurgence of religious interest. Priests revised many of the laws in hope that when Israel returned home, these revised laws would have a better chance of acceptance. Among the jubilee laws those controlling the release of slaves were most affected. Emancipation was moved from the seventh year to the jubilee year.[2] But only the regulations affecting the fallow fields and the debt release were observed with any consistency, and it was not long until complicated "legal" ways were devised for circumventing even these laws. In the process of rabbinic discussions, the jubilee gradually moved from literal obedience into the realm of speculative theology—a symbol of that special time when God would redeem Israel. So Israel settled back, waiting for God to act on their behalf by bringing the jubilee to them.

During the intertestamental period, the Jews were dominated by foreign powers. Attempts at self-liberation involved huge loss of life and widespread suffering, but brought only temporary freedom. Israelites were certain that God's Spirit had departed from them, and they longed for the day when a true prophet of God would once again be in their midst (1 Macc 4:46; 9:27; 14:41; etc.). In their despair their hope that God would soon redeem them began to fade, and jubilee became even more firmly enveloped in future, spiritual meanings that had little contact with their present situation.

Jesus Announces Jubilee

Thus the stage was set for Jesus to appear in His hometown synagogue, publicly claiming to be God's anointed spokesman and announcing that the jubilee had come. The evidence supporting the jubilean content of His opening proclamation is summarized as follows.

1. At the jubilee everyone was to return to his family (Lev 25:10, 13). Matthew (13:54), Mark (6(1), and Luke (4:16) each report this return to Nazareth as part of Jesus' ministry. Luke strengthens the connection to jubilee by

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describing Nazareth as the place "where he had been brought up," thus explaining why Jesus came to Nazareth for this occasion rather than going to Bethelehem.

2. The jubilee year began on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9). There was in Jesus' day a set cycle of Torah texts (Old Testament law) to be read in the synagogue. These were followed by a Haphtarah (prophet) reading which supported the Torah. The specific Haphtarah texts were only suggested, and within certain guidelines the reader was free to make his own selection. Jesus was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah (Lk 4:17). Isaiah 61:10-11 was the suggested Haphtarah for the final Consolation sabbath which came just before the Day of Atonement. When Jesus was given the scroll of Isaiah, already opened to this text, He used the freedom of selection allowed Him and chose to read instead from Isaiah 61:1-2—also a very appropriate Consolation sabbath text. From this Consolation text we conclude that Jesus must have appeared in Nazareth just prior to the Day of Atonement, in order to make His jubilee announcement in accordance with the Leviticus requirements.

3. Working from references within Luke (1:5; 2:2; 3:1), from datable events provided by first-century historian Josephus, and from Roman records, we can determine that the year was most likely AD 26. This becomes especially interesting when, working from Josephus and Jewish intertestamental literature, one discovers that AD 26 was the beginning of a sabbath year.

4. Since the jubilee was never observed with regularity, most scholars stop here, saying it is impossible to determine whether or not AD 26/27 (the Jewish year overlaps the Christian year) was in fact a jubilee year. But Dr. August Strobel, a German professor of New Testament, does not quit so easily. He argues on the basis of calculations going back to Ezra, that if the jubilee had been observed regularly, AD 26/27 would in fact have been the seventh sabbath year.[3]

5. We have already referred to the jubilean character of Isaiah 61, but additional comment is warranted. The text is actually a combination of Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. The mixing of these texts gives strong indication that such "jubilee texts" were commonly used by Jesus and were identified with His ministry. Isaiah 29:18-19; 35:5, 6, 10; 42:6-9; 49:8-13 are also possible "jubilee texts." Luke, quoting the Septuagint from memory, unintentionally inserts 58:6 into 61:1-2 because each text had been used frequently by Jesus, and there is substantial similarity.

Thus the timing, the location, and the Old Testament Scripture all point to the jubilean content of the announcement. But will this theme serve to unite the various elements of the story?

After reading the Scripture, Jesus announced that it had been fulfilled (4:21). He declared that the "acceptable year of the Lord" is NOW. In doing this He brought the jubilee out of the vague, spiritual, other-worldly realm of the future where first-century Judaism had lodged it; He made it something to be observed in their own immediate social and economic circles.

The people responded with a call for proof. The "physician, heal thyself" (4:23) statement shows that they recognized the jubilean content of the sermon.[4] Speaking out of their own udnerstanding of jubilee, they wanted evidence of its presence. "If this is the jubilee, prove it by showing us some of the blessings that are to come with it; then we'll believe you." As is so often the case in man's relationship with God, they passed over their responsibilities of obedience, going directly to the blessing which God had promised them—if they were obedient.

Jesus responded immediately to this faulty understanding of jubilee (4:24) by firmly refusing their demand. "No prophet is acceptable. . ." is His way of telling them, "I'm not going to work miracles just to make you accept what I say, because jubilee is not a miraculous act of God." He was returning the jubilee back to its original Mosaic terms. He was telling the synagogue worshipers that jubilee is not something God does for them while they just sit there. It was to be their response to God's continuing grace by correcting the injustices which had developed among them.

Finally, Jesus also redefined who is to be included in the jubilee celebration (4:25-27). From their own history He showed how God has never limited Himself only to the Jews. In fact, He has on occasion withheld His blessing from them and given it instead to the Gentiles. Jesus was rejecting the "God will bless us because we are children of Abraham" argument, defining the children of God in terms of living faithful obedience, not parental heritage.

This was more than the Nazareth Jews could take (4:28-30). This was not the familiar reassurance of their standing before God which they had hoped to hear from their popular favorite son. To be told that God does not automatically favor them and that they must share salvation with the Gentiles was too much. Forced to choose between Jesus and their own secure interpretation of the Scriptures, they chose to stay with their own past. Jesus, with His radical new ideas—which were, in fact, merely a fresh statement of the Mosaic law—was rejected and expelled from their synagogue.

This jubilee theme occurs over and over again in Luke's gospel. Several representative texts will be identified simply to illustrate its presence.[5]

*Luke 6:20-25. The woes and blessings identify the changes which occur at the jubilee.

*Luke 7:18-23. When asked by John to restate the evidence for His Messiahship, Jesus answers with jubilee language.

*Luke 22:31. Anxiety about the necessities of life is answered in terms closely paralleling Leviticus 25:20-21.

*Luke 19:1-10. Salvation comes to Zaccheus as he makes restitution.

Implication of the Jubilee for the Missionary Message

Jesus' use of the jubilee theme should not be seen as an end in itself. Rather, it is a paradigm, presenting the fundamental concern of God for wholeness, peace, and justice among His people. The jubilee message is revolutionary in nature, but it is a revolution brought about not by force or by seizing political power. It is brought about simply by putting it into practice. The heart of the gospel message is the invitation to participate with God's people—and thus with God—in this new kingdom which Jesus described in the jubilean terminology of forgiveness, justice, peace, and wholeness.

Several observations are offered here in an introductory way. Each is deserving of more attention than it is given here.

1. One is impressed with the similarities of religious belief between the time of Jesus and our own day. Faith has been spiritualized and given a primarily futuristic significance, detached from the ethics of everyday life much as it was in Jesus' day. But Jesus gave the gospel a specific, identifiable expression in daily life. He proclaimed a message of obedience which was radically different from the popular beliefs of the day which promised that sometime in the future God will save us out of this mess.

Much of traditional Christianity finds itself sitting in the Nazareth synagogue, expecting the affirmation of God's love upon them, and then objecting vehemently to the words of Jesus which make obedience the heart of the faith response. To separate such direct jubilee themes as money, labor relations, use of natural resources, use of industrial capital, treatment of the poor, etc., from the gospel—even to claim that they belong to an important "phase two" of gospel proclamation—is a severe distortion of the Jesus message.

2. When Jesus announced that the kingdom is here (4:21), He was announcing the activity of God in and through His own ministry as God's servant. From that perspective, there is nothing we can do to bring in the kingdom, for God in Jesus has already brought it in. It is for us to decide whether or not we will live in it and to invite others to live in it with us. The parallel with Leviticus 25 is fascinating. The reason for observing the jubilee is given several times: "I am the Lord your God, and I brought you out of Egypt" (vv 38, 42, 55). First century Judaism had the belief that if all Israel would keep the law perfectly for just one day, that would bring the kingdom of God. But Jesus allows no possibility for any thought of self-salvation through personal achievement. The salvation of God, as was the jubilee, is firmly rooted in God's saving grace. To argue that ethics do not belong as part of the gospel proclamation (or the faith response) indicates that one has not comprehended the full meaning of the presence of the kingdom which Jesus announced in Luke 4:21.

3. The jubilee theme is saturated with forgiveness. But the forgiveness is specific: slaves are set free, debts are canceled, property is restored. The presence of this strong forgiveness element in the jubilee theme challenges the common assumption of Christianity that forgiveness is rooted solely in the cross. Luke anchors forgiveness in the nature of God and His work, as revealed in the total life and ministry of Jesus, of which the cross/resurrection is the culmination. This holistic approach to the Jesus-event is important for Luke in His telling of the gospel story. Luke presents an integration of the complete Jesus ministry that is sadly lacking in most Christian theology. The reason the Jews wanted to get rid of Jesus—and it begins with this very first episode at Nazareth—is because of the things He taught and did (4:28-30; 6:6-11; 11:54; 19:47; 22:2; 23:2, 5). The events of the ministry of Jesus provide the reason for His death, and His death and resurrection give authority to His ministry. Already in this first recorded public appearance, the present availability of God's grace is forcefully declared and jubilee living is given as the proper response to grace. God's grace is not tied exclusively to the cross of Jesus. The good news which Jesus proclaimed is not primarily the cross, but the present reality of the kingdom of God. Jesus proclaimed forgiveness and salvation as a live option in response to his announcement of the presence of the kingdom. The possibility of salvation—participation in the kingdom—was a reality before Jesus died. His word to Zaccheus says it succinctly, "Today, salvation has come to this house" (Lk 19:9). Using one of Isaiah's "jubilee texts," Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:2 also emphasizes "today."

Therefore, to load all our "salvation theology" on the cross does not give proper significance to the revelation of God in the ministry of Jesus. Luke, from the very beginning, builds a holistic theology which says that the death and resurrection of Jesus do not **by themselves** constitute all there is to God's saving event in Jesus. He sees the entire presence of Jesus (public ministry, death, resurrection and ascension) as a unified confrontation of the saving God with the human race. Jesus does not reject the validity of God's past redemptive activity. Instead, He affirms it and uses it as the foundation upon which to build the proclamation which He is making of God's present saving grace.

There are other themes present in this text which cannot be developed here:

1. The Christology of 4:18-21 has positive implications for Jewish and Christian dialogue.

2. The proclamation of jubilee to Jesus' home synagogue at Nazareth raises the question of the kind of gospel we preach in our established congregations. Do we interpret the missionary message differently at home so that it does not speak so directly to our own disobedience and idolatry?

3. The jubilee theme has sobering implications for much of Western Christianity, for we are the rich and powerful of the world. For us, is the jubilee proclamation good news—or bad news?

4. Jesus refused to perform miracles in order to gain a hearing, because in performing them He would have denied the very message He was proclaiming. Are we always clear about the methods we use in order to gain the opportunity to be heard? Do we sometimes identify too completely with those in control so that our security is not threatened?

The jubilee theme is exciting because it illuminates many of the things Jesus said. But it is also troubling because most of Western Christianity is wealthy and powerful, and we have become spiritually comfortable with that wealth. We have redirected the gospel message to accommodate our economic status. Perhaps the most striking implication of the jubilee message for Western Christianity is in its message to us: we who have for generations been the missionaries, taking the gospel to others, may now need to allow that function to be reversed, so that our brothers and sisters from Africa, Asia, South America, etc. can come to us with the Jesus-call to repentance, restitution, forgiveness, and participation in the kingdom which was announced at Nazareth.

Notes

1. Jesus and the Spirit, v 18; Jesus and the Old Testament prophets, vv 18-19; the announcement of the kingdom of God, v 21; faith as a basis for miracles, vv 22-24; mission to the Gentiles, vv 25-27; rejection by the Jews (symbolizing his death) vv 28-29; his ultimate victory, v 30. All these have been given as the reason Luke tells the story.

2. This extended the term of slavery from six years to a possible 48 years. Compare Ex 21:2-6 and Deut 15:12, 18 (the earlier form of the law) with Lev 25: 39-41, 55 (the later form).

3. I am presently corresponding with Dr. Strobel on various details of his work. He believes the jubilee is the fiftieth year, coming one year after the seventh sabbath (Lev 25:10), thus he concludes that AD 27/28 was the jubilee year. While identifying the jubilee year would be helpful, the validity of the theme itself does not depend upon proving the date.

4. This statement probably originated as a challenge given by a member of the congregation. By the time Luke received the material, it had been switched to Jesus and made part of the sermon.

5. John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus,* pp 64-77, provides the best concise summary of this material, but his list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Bibliography

Because few writers deal with the jubilee theme, preferring to develop one of the themes listed in footnote 1, it is difficult to suggest further reading. The following may be useful:

Eltester, Walther, et. al.: *Jesus in Nazareth.* Berlin: DeGruyter, 1972.

A collection of four studies—three in German—on this one event.

Erich Grasser, *Jesus in Nazareth,* August Strobel; *Die Ausrufung des Jobeljahres in der Nazareth-predigt Jesu;* Robert Tannehill, *The Mission of Jesus according to Lk 4:16-30;* Walther Eltester, *Israel im lukanischen Werk und die Nazareth-perikope.*

Kraybill, Don: *The Upside Down Kingdom.* Herald Press, 1978. Good, popular approach to subject, built on solid foundation.

Trocme, Andre: *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution.* Herald Press, 1973. Not as good as Yoder, but covers more territory.

Yoder, John Howard: *The Politics of Jesus.* Eerdmans, 1972. Basic foundation.

A THEOLOGY OF MISSION IN OUTLINE

Mennonite Board of Missions

The Mission of God

The Purpose of God's Mission

1. God's ultimate purpose is to "unite all things in Christ"—the redemption of mankind—"to the praise of his glorious grace" (Rom 8:20-23; Eph 1; Col 1:15-20; Rev 4:11; 5; 7:9-12; Ezek 36:16-32; Is 43:7).

2. Within history God is calling out and creating a new people to be the sign and instrument of his purposes (Gen 12:1-3; 17:4-8; Acts 2:38-40; 3:25; Eph 2; 1 Pet 2:9f).

3. The "mission of God" refers to the fact that ***mission*** arises out of God's nature and action for he both sends and is sent, and every other authentic missionary action derives from his mission (Jn 1; 3:16f; 5:36f; 6:47-51; 17:18; 20:21b).

The People of God in Mission

4. The people of God are witnesses. They respond to God's mission through specific efforts in time and space. These ***missions*** represent God's mission faithfully to the extent they extend the rule of God. To the degree missions promote ethnocentrism, secular power patterns, a spirit of conquest or result in cultural enslavement, they impede God's mission (cf Jn 17:18; 20:21b).

5. As the reconciled community, the people of God become a sign and firstfruits of God's rule and kingdom. As they manifest the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, they are the new humanity living amid the old. When this happens God's people portray the message of the gospel and thus become a part of the good news (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:11-14).

6. Church and kingdom are not synonyms. Kingdom refers to God's rule or reign. God's rule creates the church and the church witnesses to the kingdom. The church is God's people to whom the keys of the kingdom have been given in order to open it to all peoples. Thus the church is the instrument of the kingdom. The missionary message, as Jesus himself showed, is that the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ has now come among humanity and is moving toward final victory over the powers of this world (Mt 4:17; Mk 1:14f; cf Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

7. The people of God are ambassadors of the kingdom of God and witnesses to his mighty acts in history. They proclaim and demonstrate kingdom concern for freedom and reconciliation, for righteousness and human welfare. They call men and women to receive God's salvation through Jesus Christ by accepting his rule and lordship (Acts 2:14-36; Rom 14:17; 2 Cor 5:20; cf Lk 4:18-21).

Renewal in Mission

8. History shows that the people of God do not always keep a clear vision of mission. The church-world relationship is complex and at times ambiguous. God's people fall prey to worldly forces which press them into the world's mold. This always leads to a loss of missionary conviction. The church is also tempted to exploit ***mission*** by using ***missions*** as crusades which enhance the church's prestige or power. The church ultimately becomes an institution of self-preservation rather than God's movement of salvation. God's people need to be renewed continually in mission.

9. Mission emerges out of worship. In worship God reveals himself to his people as the God of grace, righteousness, judgment and holiness. The people of God become authentic when they live in repentance. When the people encounter God, acknowledge their need and turn to him, they are changed into his likeness. This experience of God's grace and glory will lead his people to identify with his missionary purposes. This is the source of missionary dynamic (Ps 67; Is 6; Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 3:18).

Mission—God the Redeemer

Breaking into human life

10. Throughout Biblical history God continually breaks into human experience in order to redeem fallen humanity. God is the God who in the Exodus led the people out of Egypt, gave them the law at Sinai and formed a covenant with them. He made them a people by rescuing them from obscurity, saving them from their sins, and delivering them from their enemies. He restored them to fellowship with himself so that they might live in shalom. Adam-in-alienation is superseded by Abraham-in-fellowship (Gen 12:2; Deut 10:12-22; 26:5-11; Lk 1:46-55; cf 1 Pet 2:9-10).

Initiated and endorsed by Mennonite Board of Missions as a document against which to measure its faithful stewardship of delegated missions leadership for the Mennonite Church.

Reaching out in love

11. God showed himself to humanity most fully in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The incarnation revealed divine love personally and directly. God reaffirmed his creation in the incarnation; as his final redemptive initiative, he took on human form. The incarnation is fundamental to God's mission as the mode of his coming (Jn 1; 14:8-11; Phil 2:5-8; Heb 1-2; 1 Jn 4:7-11).

12. Jesus Christ entered human history as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Suffering Servant, announcing the advent of the kingdom of God. He began his ministry by proclaiming that the kingdom had become reality in himself and was now to be accepted. It was the message of hope and salvation to a hopeless, dying world. This is the essential missionary message (Mt 4:17, 23; Mk 1:14f; cf Mt 11:4-6; Lk 4:18-21; 11:14-23; 17:20f).

13. The motive power for God's mission is divine love. God is love. This describes God's nature and the form of his action. Because God is love, he loves humanity without limit, to the extent of allowing them to choose to live in sin and reject his love. Those who reject God's love in Christ choose death—the state of being lost. For divine love judges sin by exposing its destructiveness and death-bound character. In his mission, God-as-love reaches out in grace to his creatures. The new creation is humanity liberated from sin through love (Jn 3:16f; Rom 5-8; 2 Cor 5:17-19; 1 Jn 4:7-11).

14. Jesus lived in total openness to God's will. This full obedience to God brought him into conflict with the world, finally leading to his death on the cross. By the death of Jesus Christ, God overcame humanity's alienation. Scripture describes this action in various terms: reconciliation, justification, redemption, adoption. Fallen humanity is enslaved to the kingdom of this world and alienated from God. By his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has dethroned the power of sin. His love draws men and women to himself; as they turn to God, they are "born anew." To be reconciled to God under the lordship of Christ is to be saved. Conversion is the conscious "turning to" God from the gods and bondage of the world and being set free to participate in the Messianic community—God's movement of salvation. Conversion is repentance—reorientation to the new reality of Jesus Christ (Mt 5-7; Lk 9:57-62; Jn 3:1-13; Rom 5:1f, 12-14, 15-21; 8:1-11; 2 Cor 5:16-19; Eph 2:13-14; Col 2:8-14; 3:1-4).

Called to be sent

15. Central to God's redemptive mission is the calling out of a people whom, in turn, he sends as envoys of his kingdom. In his covenant with Abraham, God promised that through Abraham the peoples of the world would be blessed. The purpose of the people of God is fulfilled in their life in him and in their being sent out. Whenever the people of Israel renewed their covenant with God, they recognized that they were renewing their obligation to the orphan, the widow, the weak, and the stranger. Worship was a time for covenant renewal—when God's people deepened their commitment to his purposes. Because he was a sending God, they came to understand themselves as a sent out people and consecrated themselves to be witnesses among the peoples to what God was doing (Gen 12:1-3; 17:4-8; Is 42:6f; 49; Jn 20:21b; Acts 2:38-40; 3:25; 1 Pet 2:9f).

16. Jesus set forth his manifesto for the new community in the Sermon on the Mount. He addressed his message to his own people but met unbelief. The few who responded he gathered into this new community to be that people who live in the new reality of the kingdom where God is leader, and who participate in extending the kingdom through Messianic activity and witness (Mt 5-7).

17. Thus the incarnation inverts worldly values by forming a new fellowship of love where all destructive distinctions based on race, class, language, or nationality are overcome in Jesus Christ. In contrast to the kingdom of this world, the redeemed community demonstrates the possibility of personal wholeness within a context of social righteousness. This context is sustained not by the community's inherent goodness but rather in its continual submission to Christ's lordship and repentance of its sins. Its life is sustained by God's grace alone. The new creation thus is socially and personally relevant because it poses a dynamic and morally persuasive alternative to the world which is dying and passing away. Through worship, witness, and loving works the church reveals the meaning of the kingdom and seeks to draw people to it for salvation and healing (Mt 4:17, 23; 9:35-10:4; Mk 1:4f; Lk 1:46-55; Acts 15:6-18; Eph 1-2; Col 3:11).

Mission—God the Creator

Setting for fellowship

18. In the creation God provided the ideal setting in which humanity might flourish and have fellowship with himself. Peace pervaded Eden. God's creation was good. God's purposes in creation are most clearly discerned in his redemptive actions. Mankind was the object of God's love from the very beginning, and the "pioneer of our salvation" was active in creation as well. The New Testament interprets creation through God's redemptive acts. God's eternal plan was to have fellowship with his creatures (Gen 1-2; Rom 8:18-24; Eph 1:3-10; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1-2).

Provision for well-being

19. The Bible describes creation as including the physical environment, varied forms of life, and provision for humanity's complete well-being. Mankind was appointed as steward of God's creation (Gen 1:28; 2:15).

Frustration and Re-creation

20. Adam and Eve's exile from Eden signaled alienation from God and chaos instead of harmony, both among people as well as between humanity and nature. In the Fall Satan frustrated the purposes of creation. Now evil was located in the heart of mankind. From that center it ever spreads out and affects all relationships and whatever men and women create. Evil was intrinsic to the human condition. God did not, however, abandon his creation, and humanity continues to bear the image of its creator. But creation labors under the burden of sin, "groaning in travail," and awaits its liberation from bondage to sin and decay. God is re-creating his creation through the new creation, restoration, salvation, and redemption. What was promised in creation is finally fulfilled through the work of Christ (Gen 3; Is 65:17-25; Rom 8:18-23; 1 Cor 15:45-50; 2 Cor 5:17f; Col 1:15-22; 3:1-11; Rev 21:5).

Mission—God the Consummator

New dimensions

21. The ascension of Jesus and Pentecost ushered in the time when the work of Christ took on new dimensions. The Holy Spirit is God dynamically present and at work in the world, carrying out the ministry of Jesus Christ until his purposes are fulfilled (Acts 1:8).

Urgency with joy

22. The Holy Spirit is extending Christ's rule by overcoming all forms of sin and the "dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:14b)—racism, sexism, tribalism, nationalism—and binding together as one new people individuals from many peoples. The urgency of mission is the urgency of the Holy Spirit responding to the whole creation which is in travail awaiting "adoption as sons." The missionary witness is marked by both the urgency and joy of the Spirit as he leads God's people out in mission (Rom 8:19-23; 10:12f; Gal 3:28; Eph 1-2; Col 3:10f; Rev 5:1-14; 7:9-12; 21:22-22:5).

Toward a new destiny

23. In this age two powers are in conflict: the power of Babel and the power of Pentecost. In the garden of Eden Adam followed Satan and became alienated from God. The people of Babel built their tower as an act of rejection of God. They demanded independence and autonomy, but disorder, confusion, disharmony, and chaos resulted. Immediately following Jesus' baptism, Satan challenged him to exercise various forms of worldly power. Because he was completely obedient to God, Jesus refused; but throughout his ministry, he continually confronted the demonic powers. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ represented the decisive triumph of the power of God over the demonic—the power of life over death. What this means potentially for mankind was made clear at Pentecost: Babel was reversed. At Pentecost, the same Spirit who was present in creation and in Jesus came upon expectant peoples as wind and fire, fashioning them into a new community. The confusion of languages was overcome so that onlookers heard the word of God each "in his own language." The power of the Spirit in the community resulted in a rapid growth in numbers and commitment to one another (Gen 1:2; 11; Acts 2:1-13; Eph 2:1-7; Col 1:12-14, 21f; 2:15).

24. The struggle between Christ and Babel today is a continuation of the age-old contest. Christ's resurrection assures us that the "powers" have already been defeated. Yet they continue in this age on their destructive course. Only when Jesus Christ comes again in final judgment and triumph will death be destroyed and all powers be subjected to him. The intense conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world results in persecution and suffering for God's people. They are called to meet the attacks of the powers in the spirit of self-sacrifice and suffering love as Jesus himself did "to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:7b; 1 Cor 15:12-28; Col 1:29; 2:8-15).

25. The principalities and powers exert their influence in many other ways. Whenever power is exercised Satan seeks to exploit the situation. The barriers, for example, which people erect against one another to maintain racial purity, or class or tribal interests, to strengthen one nation at another peoples' expense, are all expressions of Babel's power. The church, too, is confronted by the challenge of power. Whenever the church aligns itself with oppressive social, economic or political power interests, it betrays Christ's lordship. As the church submits to the power of the Spirit, it will repent of such idolatry. Only in this way can it demonstrate to the world the power of God (cf Mt 4:1-11; Eph 2:1f; 6:12).

26. The state, or civil authority, is a means of curbing chaos and restraining evil in a society which does not acknowledge God's rule. The state itself remains outside "the perfection of Christ," that is, it is under God's sovereignty but does not acknowledge Christ's lordship. Order and control can become instruments of oppression. One of the church's functions is to witness in the world against injustice and immorality and point to God's intentions for human well-being (Rom 13; Eph 3:10; Rev 13).

27. The age of the Spirit will be consummated when Christ comes again and his rule is recognized universally. This is the goal toward which all history moves. The missionary witness declares and interprets the way in which Jesus Christ is overcoming the powers and thereby creating a new history and a new destiny (Rev 5:1-14; 7:4-12; Eph 1:18-23; 3:7-10; Col 1:15-20; Rom 8:22-24a).

The Missionary Imperative

Faith challenging unfaith

28. The people of God are called to mission. The

mission is God's and ***the people*** are his. When they daily pray "thy kingdom come," they reaffirm his lordship and commit themselves to missionary obedience.

29. This is the missionary age. In it the disciple community continues the mission Jesus himself began on earth. Following the resurrection Jesus commissioned his disciples to take the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth until the end of the age, calling men and women to become his disciples. He linked this mandate to mission, however, directly to the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, then, provides the power and direction to the Messianic community in its witness to Jesus Christ in the world. The kingdom which was prefigured in Jesus' ministry is now being extended in this age among all peoples (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15f; Lk 24:46-49; Jn 20:20-23; Acts 1:8).

30. This age must be understood eschatologically. The Holy Spirit is extending the Messianic reign, but that reign is establishing within history a part of the reality which is to be disclosed fully in Christ's second coming. The Messianic community is that group which is already living in the context of the reign of Christ, even though it does so in a world hostile to Christ's claims. This is the focal point of missionary action: faith in the Messiah challenging unfaith or rejection of the Messiah. The evangelistic task is to announce the good news that Jesus Christ has come in love and saving power. Now is the time for all to repent and be saved and become a part of God's people (Acts 2:14-36).

31. In order to share the good news of God's rule, the people of God must cross linguistic, social, and political boundaries to reach people who have not heard the gospel. Although the Holy Spirit sovereignly endows each member of the body of Christ with spiritual gifts, some gifts contribute most immediately to the nurturing and maintenance of the body, while others are for purposes of witness and service across various boundaries. The church is challenged to respect each Spirit-given gift. Apostolic gifts are to be released in order that the whole church will be led in sharing the gospel of the kingdom in the world. Those gifted to be apostles and preachers feel the "fire burning in their bones." For them not to proclaim the good news is to act against their very nature for "the love of Christ controls" them to share what they know (Jer 20:9; 1 Cor 9:15-18; 12; 14; 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 4:1-16; cf Acts 13:1-4).

A new way of life

32. Jesus himself announced the missionary message at the start of his ministry. He defined it in terms of the prophetic message of the Old Testament—the rule of God and his justice. Jesus Christ, as Messiah, began to fulfill what had been promised long before. He set before men and women an alternative, calling them to repent and "turn from" the bondage of the world. He enables them to live in the new order of salvation where the weak, oppressed, disinherited, enslaved and morally bankrupt are ***empowered*** by God's Spirit (Mt 4:23; 9:35; Lk 1:46-55; 4:18f; cf Jer 31:31-33).

33. Consistent with the Jubilee paradigm, Jesus emphasized lifting up the weak and poor, healing the sick and releasing the prisoner. He pronounced judgment on the rich and powerful who had no compassion and insisted that for them to live under God's rule required repentance and turning to a new way of life (Mt 11:2-5).

34. The foundation of this new order is love and self-sacrifice rather than coercion and self-fulfillment. The message of the kingdom is the gospel of peace: a gracious, loving God reconciling unworthy individuals to himself and thereby to one another. Love, the means of humanity's reconciliation to God, is both the basis for reconciliation among people and the path of obedient discipleship, even to the extent of loving the enemy. Only on this basis is it possible to create out of all nations one new people (Eph 1-3).

The mode of mission

35. The fundamental mode of mission is incarnation, the embodiment of the gospel in a particular cultural context. The gospel addresses every culture from within rather than from without.

36. Mission is carried out within history. Mission interprets history Christologically and, therefore, seeks to create a new history by introducing a new order. True meaning in history is found in the work of Jesus Christ. Mission is the basic means by which God in Jesus Christ has chosen to achieve his purposes (Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:2-4).

37. Missionary action is always addressed to people in specific cultural contexts. The gospel does not despise culture but judges every culture. The incarnation maintained the tension between the divine and the human. Jesus, the Christ, was perceived as an authentic human being, identified with a particular people in a given locale. Yet he focused God's love and judgment on human nature and culture (Mt 13:53-56).

38. The Biblical view of mission includes both the personal and the social, both humanity and the cosmos. Human sin has led to the defacement of nature. Mission leads to the restoration of what has been lost through sin. The eschatological summing up of all things in Christ signifies the new creation in which the power of sin is overcome and a new order is established. Within this new reality individuals experience salvation already because they have begun to live as members of the new creation, a new order (Col 1:15-23; cf Rev 21:1-4).

A strategy for mission

39. The strategy for mission derives directly from the structure of the life of the people of God. This strategy is based on the new peoplehood. The Messianic community lives the gospel. It demonstrates how both the individual and the community take repentance seriously by

submitting their structures and lifestyle to the lordship of the Messiah. The gospel is thereby embodied in the human situation. Mission thrusts the Messianic community outward, dispersing it among the peoples of the world. It is a movement of sojourners and pilgrims moving through history and throughout the world witnessing to the kingdom of God and incorporating into the movement all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord (Mt 28:18-20, Mk 16:15f; Lk 24:46-49; Jn 20:19-23; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 2:11).

40. This strategy calls for the apostolic witness to be expressed through multiple forms: word, deed, and presence. The church's vocation in the world includes preaching, healing, witnessing before authorities, teaching, living in fellowship, recounting God's mighty acts and applying that message to life, and suffering for the sake of the gospel. The church is not called to assure a certain outcome in history or work for its own success. The church is not called simply to serve the world. Beyond good works and humanitarian efforts, it points to the claims of the kingdom from whose existence and dynamic it springs. It knows that God is doing a new thing in history and testifies to that action. The church, therefore, takes the reality of sin seriously. In its daily walk the church knows the continuing struggle against the power of sin in the church and in the world. It is only by grace that God's people exist, but their existence as a miracle of grace brings God's kingdom near. The presence of the kingdom poses before men and women the possibility of life rather than death. It is always an invitation to accept the new and liberated life in Christ. The witness to the kingdom has power and authority because it is given in the mighty name of Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit (Acts 4:10-12; 2 Cor 5:11-12).

Copies of ***Theology of Mission in Outline*** are available in booklet form from Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46514.

To the editor of *Mission-Focus:*

The "Vietnam issue" of *Mission-Focus* (VI:2, November 1977) can become an important contribution to missiological reflection for those who feel the suffering servant stance is essential to the mission of the church of Christ and His kingdom. You have effectively pointed out four very different views behind missionary practice in relating to particular political contexts.

One has the feeling that Metzler has come to understand your "fourth type" (quoted near the end of this letter of comment) **since** his Vietnam experience and thus judges that time from a perspective he did not then hold. Klassen, sensing Christian continuity in the midst of ambiguity, does not feel the need to identify with that kind of guilt. Then finally, Martin gives a resume of lessons learned, almost a discussion of problems to be aware of the next time around.

I read these reports while studying church planting in West Africa from 1875 to 1925. In West Africa, there was on the one hand mission work in the midst of Black American colonizers among the Glebo of Cape Palmas, Liberia; on the other hand French Catholics and English Methodists (with the help of French Methodists and Reformed) worked among the coastal peoples within the "pacification" structures of the French colony, the Ivory Coast. The parallels with the American Vietnam experience are so striking that one is tempted to take the latter as a short replay of the whole missionary experience within nineteenth and twentieth century colonialism. Missionaries from that time, looking back, would share some of the understandings and perspectives of Metzler, Klassen, and Martin.

American Mennonite Mission to Vietnam clearly predated the Vietnam War. This fact was seen as a strength of the Mennonite presence there during the war. On the other hand, I remember well how O. O. Miller (then secretary of the Eastern Mennonite Board) explained his understanding of that presence in relation to the **pax americana** which, he said, "will, like the **pax romana,** be around for a long, long time, probably even longer than that of the **pax brittanica.**" Vatican II released the missiological rebound to the end of **pax romana** ecclesiology in the flowering of liberation theologies in Latin America. They are contextual but still too much in reaction to the Roman ecclesiastical imperium to be mature guides for the messianic community of the Suffering Servant.

An astute English observer of the past two centuries of British Christian missions has pointed out how the missions adopted British colonial and imperial policy, including the slogan "Christianity, civilization, and commerce." He concludes that U. K. missionary strategy today is largely related to the aftermath of decolonization. This means that the British counterpart to Rome's liberation theology is probably still a long way off. Mission and church and social and political historians and analysts will be telling us about this for a long, long time to come.

Yet over and over again, one hears from the fruits of western missions of colonial times, "We regret so much of what was done when you were here; we're glad you came." This painful contradiction recognizes honest intentions along with a distorted dynamic which produced unfortunate consequences. Given this reality, could we

see the Mennonite experience of Vietnam not just as a **replay** of the past—thirty years too late—but rather as a **preview** of what we American missionaries and our supporting constituency are deeply involved in wherever we are in mission outside the borders of the United States. (The Canadian context differs because the role of Canada in world politics differs.) The large increase in American missionaries and mission funds (mostly from non-mainline churches, as ourselves) since World War II—the beginning of the **pax americana**—has not let up substantially. Our own Mennonite missionary expansion has been integrally related to that **pax americana.** But only in Vietnam has that reality come and gone within half a lifetime. Can those of us committed to mission today learn from such a pre-run and thus avoid operating blindly under the **pax americana?**

As you write in your "emerging lessons": "The political context is important to mission. Missionaries value security. A government which insures social and political tranquility becomes an ally. Without government goodwill a mission cannot continue to work. But does the missionary barter his witness against injustice for personal security?" When I asked a former Salvation Army leader in the Congo about their response to the Kimbanguist relations in the thirties and forties, the simple response was, "If we had protested, we would have lost our right to witness to Christ." The all-powerful economic powers in North America reason this way and become the allies and defenders (and, as in Vietnam, sometimes the creators) of the "social and political tranquility" necessary to maintain economic activity as they define it.

The churches within the same areas experience the throttling, and sometimes repression, that comes from the "social and political tranquility" which makes the **American** mission possible. (In the Congo, it was the **Belgian** mission as over against the Kimbanguist.) Americans seek the **privilege** of **American** missions (e.g., Rex Humbard's television ministry in Brazil), without sensing the real meaning of colonialism as the imposition of values and patterns and models which ultimately serve the top of the pyramids of power and wealth which in turn structure the future of those whose sacrifices construct them. Thus it is not strange when churches that grew out of the colonial period use neo-colonial language. But the relationship of neo-colonialism to the **pax americana** is that of muscle to bone.

U.S. policy in Vietnam had to be good for the Vietnamese because it was good for the U.S.; Everett Dirksen called it "our front line of defense." Today even Jimmy Carter's concern for "human rights" must be seen within such a context of muscle and bone. (A UPI release reported recently that when Jimmy Carter is no longer president he would like to become a Southern Baptist missionary to influence people somewhere "for God and our side.") In this context foreign missionaries and their constituency need to share a common critical perspective. Within the U.S., given its provincial self-understanding, the missionary constituency is hard-pressed to have any real critical perspective on "our best interests." It is hard to believe that our best interests might not be good for others, that our economic prosperity (and sometimes prodigality) is sometimes even bad—very bad—for others. And support for American foreign missionaries must come from those who earn within the structures, which do—inevitably—"what is in our best interests."

One of the beautiful chapters—recorded in many places—of the early nineteenth century missionary effort is the story of the way some missionaries' Christian messianism functioned to critique and even oppose colonial policy, strategy, and patterns. One historian points out the shift in late ninteenth century missions when missionaries moved from "opposition" to "**loyal** opposition" in one country. This happened in Gleboland when colonists kept criticizing missionaries for praying for **both** the Glebo "kings" **and** the Liberian authorities. The shift was crucial. (But the Glebo Christians could also wonder why the missionaries were more loyal to the outside invaders than to the centuries-old existing authority.)

How do missionaries live out the "opposition" stance of the suffering servant when their constituency is loyal to the **pax americana**? In the Vietnam paradigm the Mennonite constituency in the U.S. was often in the "opposition" or "loyal opposition," perhaps because Vietnam did not appear to be in the U.S.'s best interests. A vanguard of students, Peace Section specialists, and observant leaders gave another dimension, another "look" to a constituency which appeared to be basically loyal even in conscientious objection. **If** the **pax americana** is going to be around a long, long time (Vietnam and Watergate are indications that one does not change things "at the top"), and **if** the Mennonite experience in Vietnam is a preview for late twentieth century world mission of the American Mennonite church, a major **missionary** task confronts us. That task is the creation of a conscious "opposition" constituency which will support the "opposition" missionary, just as in the days of the slave trade and liquor traffic the missionary was supported by ground swell opposition in Britain.

Our Promethean technological assumptions and the current myth of personal fulfillment are both allied with American wealth and power, itself fortified with the conviction that history is on our side: this is the backdrop for the **pax americana.** American Mennonite world mission will be effective only to the extent that American Mennonites are able to learn what it means to be what you describe as "a messianic movement led by Jesus Christ [the Suffering Servant]. The missionary is the vanguard of the movement. The messianic kingdom presents an alternative to the present world order. The church does not seek to impose this order on the larger society but rather models the 'newness' of the messianic kingdom in its common life. The world perceives this as a judgment on itself and may even find the presence of the church intolerable." The working out of a policy **in the U.S. A.** which reflects this stance is the most crucial missiological issue facing American Mennonites, to say nothing of the thousands of American foreign missionaries of other denominations.

Is there hope? I will cite three signs:

(1) The information which Mennonite Central Committee's

Washington Memo gives its readers is a sign of hope for American Mennonite world mission. But how many people in our constituency **read** this? Of those who read, how many **identify** with the concerns? And of those who identify, how many really see **response** as essential to the worldwide mission of the church in the U.S.?

(2) When Goshen Biblical Seminary examined the meaning of endowment funds for its future, it asked (a) what Christ's teaching had to say in this concern, and (b) what endowment funds meant for the relationship of our U.S. church to Third World churches. Here it was not simply assumed that what is good for our institution is somehow—by definition—good for the rest of the world church and its mission. This is a new dimension in the calculus of ethical, social, political decision, and a **sine qua non** of our world mission.

(3) A growing number of people see the need to give at least one percent of their gross annual income as a (non-missionary) "restitution fund" for the Third World, as a reminder that before we give to the mission of the church we must restore to those who have suffered from the "one-way flow" which capitalism requires and in which—by virtue of our residence—we are implicated.

These are signs of hope which indicate to foreign missionaries that their constituency in the "richest and most powerful nation in the world's history" is not simply justifying the **pax americana**, but is, in new and creative ways, offering its loyalty to Jesus Christ and living out its opposition to everything "at home" which tends to work against the good of brothers and sisters in Christ abroad.

David A. Shank

Aberdeen, Scotland

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue of *Mission-Focus* completes six years of publication. During the first four years each issue, with two exceptions, featured one article. Volume V introduced the pattern of several articles each issue, sometimes addressed to a theme. Editors enjoy reader response. Although M-F has not been flooded by "letters to the editor," readers kept words of support, suggestion, and query trickling our way.

For more than a year we have been asking what future, if any, M-F should have. Counselors suggested that M-F was filling a need and that some expansion was justified. The Mennonite Board of Missions appointed a new editorial council this past October. The editorial council consisting of Adolf Ens, Peter M. Hamm, Ivan J. Kauffmann, Robert L. Ramseyer, Willard E. Roth, Wilbert R. Shenk, and John E. Toews has begun planning for an enlarged M-F. Beginning in 1979 M-F will appear quarterly—March, June, September, and December—in a 24-page format.

M-F will continue to speak to issues confronting the missionary in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth." We want M-F to edify and educate. The new M-F will appear under the following flag: "MISSION FOCUS—from a believers church perspective." Convinced that missiological thinking today needs to be tested and clarified, we expect to continue to address issues from an avowed viewpoint.

The inaugural issue of the new series will feature a major article by John Driver on the theme "Believers Church Vision of Mission." In addition, each issue will carry a book review section.

To complete the transition from the present series to the new one, we will publish the September and November numbers for 1978 as a part of volume VI. The new series will begin as volume VII.

Wilbert R. Shenk

THE CASE FOR A TENTMAKING MINISTRY, a 24-page pamphlet by Marvin Miller, challenges traditional assumptions about patterns of ministry. Miller assays patterns of ministry biblically, theologically, historically, and practically. Originally written for a study conference in Japan, Miller's pamphlet argues for a radical revision in understanding—a change in the direction of greater biblical faithfulness and strategic effectiveness. Single copies free on request: Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

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Volume VI Number 6 September 1978

FOR MISSION LEADERS

MISSION-FOCUS

Contents

Biblical Foundations for Interdependence, John E. Toews
Structures and Strategies for Interdependence in World Mission, Charles R. Taber
Reverencing God's Image, Paul M. Miller
A Tantalizing Idea, an editorial comment

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

John E. Toews

Introduction

Interdependence concerns mutuality and reciprocity in mission. It involves the legitimate inculturation of the gospel.

How does one ground such a theology of missions in the New Testament? I have chosen to anchor such a theology in one text, Ephesians 2:11-22, rather than in numerous themes with references to many texts. On the basis of the Ephesians text, I suggest two foundations for interdependence: First, the Christ event; and second, Christ's creation of a single new man, the church.

The Outline of the Text[1]

The structure of Ephesians 2:11-22, which represents the high point of the letter, is clear. Verses 11-12 provide a description of human alienation. Verses 13-18 offer praise for Christ's reconciliation of the alienated. Verses 19-22 describe the shape of the reconciliation Christ has effected.

The central section of praise, and the longest unit of the text, is based on what most scholars recognize as a Pauline or even pre-Pauline hymn which was sung in the Christian community. This hymn describes the purpose and effect of Christ's work as peace among enemies, the creation of "a single new man," reconciliation, and common access to God. The time of this work is defined by Christ's coming. The cost and means of Christ's work is indicated by a series of phrases: "in His blood," "in His flesh," "in His person," "in one body," "through the cross," "through Him," "in one Spirit." The sign of Christ's work is pictured as peace between Jews and Gentiles. Significantly, this sociological peace precedes the description of peace between God and man in verse 16.

The final unit of the text defines the shape of Christ's peace in terms of the church as a growing body. Three images are used. First, architectural metaphors reveal the foundation and the high point toward which it is being built. Second, the building process is described as a communal event that resembles physical growth. Third, the purpose of the whole process is dwelling in the presence of God.

Reflections on the Text

Reflection on this text suggests several observations.

First of all, the Christ event, or the reconciliatory work of Christ, is described in political language. I use the word, "political," deliberately as a technical term that denotes how a group of people defines its identity and meaning by selecting leaders, structures, and processes that will embody its vision of reality. Thus, I am using a familiar term in an unfamiliar way; it is used technically and not colloquially. The Christ event was a political event in and of itself. Christ's life, death, and resurrection was a political event. It both modeled how to be and how to live as the people of God in the world, and it confronted and defeated the principalities and powers of this world.

The Christ event also was political in its effects. It created an alternative sociopolitical reality in the world, the church, as the new way of the people of God to be and live together in the world. Christ is praised in verses 14-18,

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not for bringing peace to individual souls, but for bringing two alienated peoples together. The peace Christ brings in this text is a social and political peace; it reconciles different and antagonistic people into a new political reality.

The political nature of the Christ event is intensified by the use of Isaiah 57:19 to bracket the Christ hymn (vv. 13, 17). In the Isaiah text "far away" and "near" designate Jews in exile and Jews in Palestine. The anticipated union of the two is an eschatological-political union, the messianic, reunification of the people of God. When Paul designates the "far away" and "near" as Jews and Gentiles, he is not inventing an entirely new interpretation, for "far away" had come to designate proselytes in Jewish literature. In other words, Isaiah 57:19 had already been understood as a reference to the incorporation of Gentiles into God's people. But two elements distinguish Paul's use of this text in Ephesians 2. First, it is Christ's blood, not Gentile circumcision blood, that is the means of incorporation. Second, the "far away" are sinful Gentiles, not God-fearers who participate in Jewish religious life but who have not yet formally entered the Jewish community via circumcision. The "far away" here are those people described in Ephesians 2 as "dead in lapses and sins," sons of rebellion, living in hostility against Israel and God (vv. 1-2, 14, 16).

Christ reconciles the irreconcilable, those so "far away" that they cannot be brought near. He reconciles them and makes them one. Such an act of reconciliation is a highly political activity. It disrupts all prevailing patterns of thinking and reality. It creates a new paradigm, a new perspective through which to perceive reality. Shifts in social paradigms are fundamentally political events because they alter the way people think, relate, and live.

Significantly, the reconciliation and unification of Jews and Gentiles is not due to the absorption of one into the other, but rather is a function of their inclusion in the Messiah. He is the one who came proclaiming peace (v. 17). The single new man is created in His person (v. 15). The enmity against God was killed in His person (v. 16). He united both races into one body and brought them back to God (v. 16).

Secondly, the new social reality Christ creates is described as "the new man" and "the house of God." The new social reality is an act of creation. It is not a transformed or improved reality, nor a unification of diverse elements around a new common denominator. God creates something new in Christ. This is especially evident in a comparison of the first creation account and the creation described here. In the first creation man is the last being created. But here the new man is the first being created. The church is the first fruit of God's creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The rest of creation waits for the liberation to come through the church (Rom. 8:18-22).

The new creation is called "a single new man." It is not a combination of things, but a new reality. This new reality is explicitly identified as the church in Ephesians 5:23-32. And the term church, *ecclesia,* defines an eschatological-political reality. It denotes the eschatological people of God discerning together how to live before and with God in the world.

The new reality or new man is "one . . . out of the two" (v. 15). A new reality is created, but the historic distinctions and identities remain true and recognized. The Jew may observe the law if it is not used for division or imposition. But the Gentile is free from the Jewish "yoke." In other words, Ephesians 2:15ff asserts that the people of God is different from a syncretistic mixture of Jewish and Gentile elements. The members of the church are not so equalized, leveled down, or straitjacketed as to form a third race that would be different from both Jews and Gentiles. Rather, the church consists of Jews and Gentiles who have been reconciled to one another by Christ. The "one new man" is by origin and constitution a community of several persons. He is not an individual, nor a conglomeration of identical individuals. Instead, he is an organic body consisting of distinct members.

The existence of this new man is based upon liberation from "the wall"—all forms of nationalism, religious conceit, and individualism—and upon resurrection to a new social behavior—love, including love of enemies. Jew and Gentile alike enjoy this liberation and resurrection in the church.

The composition of the "new man out of the two" safeguards the rights of Christians to be different from one another, to remember their distinct histories (Eph. 2:11), to respect priorities (Rom. 3:1-2; 9:4-5), to enjoy unity in diversity (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:7, 11-12, 16). The same composition also prevents Christians from imposing the privileges and preferences of one group upon the other; it creates genuine tolerance in the context of the church.

The joining of the two peoples into one whole reveals that neither of the two can possess salvation, peace, or life without the other. One of the most startling things in this text is the consistency with which reconciliation between men precedes reconciliation with God. First the relation to men is mentioned, and only then their relation to God. Not that the two are separable; one presupposes and interprets the other. But the point, I suggest, is that he who has no people has no God. In Christ no one enters the kingdom except in the company of fellowmen. There is no resurrection to newness of life except together with one's neighbor. There is no salvation of individual souls except in the community of those confessing "by grace" we "have been saved" (Eph. 2:5, 8).

Verses 18ff. indicate that the reality of the new man means membership in God's family and gives the members of the family access to the Father. They are no longer sojourners, those living outside the house. In Christ no one lives outside. All are now members of God's household. And all in the household have equal access "in one Spirit to the Father." The word "access" here denotes worship. All that is said of peace and reconciliation in verses 14-17 is introduced and concluded with words that speak of worship, (vv. 13-18ff). The new man is centered in the worship of God. That which sets the new social reality off from all other realities is its access to the Father and its worship of the Father.

In addition Paul asserts that the new man is founded on the apostles and prophets. The church is grounded in the proclamation, witness, and confession of its leaders. The

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church is constituted by an event, the Christ event. It lives as the presence of this Christ is proclaimed and embodied by apostles and prophets.

The center which ties together the new man and holds it together is Christ, the keystone. He constitutes the new social reality in the world, He gives it access to the Father, and He keeps it going until all things are united in Him.

Conclusion

Ephesians 2:11-22 provides an impressive theology for grounding interdependence. Christ entered a divided world to bring peace. He brought that peace by His own life and by creating the church as His people to demonstrate to the world the reality of the new order of reconciliation in the world.

The mission of the church is the incorporation of new people and peoples into the new order of reconciliation in ways that are compatible with the nature of the new social reality and its founder, Christ. That way leaves no room for triumphal ecclesiology, nor for national imperialism, nor for paradigmatic imperialism.

What does this text say to our missionary concern for interdependence. I submit several comments as hypotheses to be tested in the Mennonite brotherhood.

First of all, true interdependence is possible only by incorporation into Jesus Christ.

Secondly, true interdependence is possible only if we recognize the legitimacy of cultural-historical differences and identities. Negatively, this means overcoming nationalism, religious conceit, and individualism. Positively, it means affirming the diversity of the cultural manifestations of the Christian faith and community. We must affirm different Christian histories and priorities. In short, we must be tolerant and respectful of different cultural forms of the gospel.

Thirdly, interdependence will be a reality when we receive as many missionaries as we send. We need to recognize that we are a First World culture concerned with interdependence with Third World cultures. We are rich and satisfied. We are a post-Auschwitz, -Vietnam, and -Watergate people. We are a verbal culture poor in gestures and symbols. We are dominated and pervaded by technology. We are experts in national and ecclesiastical triumphalism. We represent a value-bankrupt culture. What we are causes doubt about our ability to disciple. I am more confident about our need to be discipled. Interdependence calls us to become disciples of missionaries who embody the gospel in different forms and value systems which are capable of "turning us round."

Fourthly, interdependence is for "us" more than for "them." It calls American Christians and missionary agencies to repentance, that is, to change paradigms. We need to become open and committed to being discipled rather than discipling. We need to listen rather than teach.

Interdependence calls us to define missions as the creation of a genuine new social reality, a church without racial or national superiorities, that is grounded in Christ. Such an understanding of missions is extremely difficult for North American Christians. It is possible only if our missionary efforts are genuinely grounded in the reconciliatory work of Christ of which Ephesians 2:11-22 speaks and if we recognize that the reconciliatory focus addresses First World Christians more forcefully than Third World Christians.

Footnote

[1] The detailed exegesis for this study is based on Markus Barth's *Ephesians,* 2 volumes, Anchor Bible (Doubleday, 1974).

STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERDEPENDENCE IN WORLD MISSION

Charles R. Taber

The vision of a truly equal, truly interdependent brotherhood of Christians in mission is not a new one. Neill, for instance, points out that Bishop A. R. Tucker of Uganda (1890-1908) "envisaged a Church in which African and foreigner would work together in true brotherhood, and on a basis of genuine equality" (1964:26). I do not think this dream was ever made explicit in the thinking of Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn, and John Nevius, though it is possible that it may have been implicit. But, as Neill says on the page already cited, "For the most part missionaries of almost all the churches were blind to this kind of possibility."

In recent years, a number of churches and missions have tried to give concrete expression to this vision. Most of these are very new, so that it is premature to make a final evaluation. But, though the designers retain their enthusiastic high hopes, I would anticipate problems as these schemes develop because I see in most of them signs that the factors which tended to perpetuate dependence and to inhibit interdependence are more intractable than had been thought. Part II of this paper will look briefly at some of these experiments. In the meantime, let us look at the background issues.

Charles R. Taber teaches at Milligan College, Tennessee. Earlier he was a missionary in Central African Empire and linguistic consultant for the United Bible Societies in West Africa. He delivered this paper to the Council of International Ministries meeting, Hillsboro, Kansas, in May 1977. Taber is editor of Milligan Missiogram *and* Gospel in Context.

The Practical Dimensions of the Problem

I will consider the practical dimensions of the difficulties

we encounter in trying to foster interdependence under three headings: history, our conception of the task, and cultural differences. These of course interpenetrate and reinforce each other, so that the solution will of necessity be more complex and all-embracing than we might guess at first look.

Historical background. It is of course true that the history within which we are forced to work, willy-nilly, is not of our making. But we cannot escape its far-reaching implications as the ground of many attitudes, formalized and institutionalized relationships, and entrenched patterns of behavior which constitute the obstacles to our efforts.

For over four centuries, Europeans systematically conquered and exploited the indigenous peoples, first of the New World, then of Africa and Asia. Starting from essentially similar levels of affluence, power, and technological development in the fifteenth century, Western and non-Western societies have since experienced vastly different histories: the West has become unimaginably wealthy and powerful, the non-West has stagnated or worse. The major factors in the present disparity of status were colonialism, slavery, mercantilism, and all of the other terrible expressions of the West's oppression of the Two-Thirds World. Once the initial advantage was gained via relatively small innovations in navigation and weaponry, it was expoited to the hilt to augment in every way possible the ways in which the West could enrich itself at the expense of its colonies.

As we have by now heard *ad nauseam*—though without necessarily realizing its full implications for us today—the missionary enterprise coincided not only in time, but also in point of origin, and even largely in attitudes, policy, and methods with the colonial enterprise. This was true even in the occasional cases where missionaries vocally and courageously protested the grosser abuses of colonialism. The indigenous cultures, native societies, and individual persons were summarily assumed to be inherently inferior to their Western counterparts. In *all* relationships between Westerner and non-Westerner, authority and initiative, as well as the relevant skills and financial resources, belonged by definition to the Westerner. This sprang from and reinforced in the Westerner a deep-seated arrogance, and in the non-Westerner led to a combination of excessive deference, dependency, self-denigration, and resentment. Since we are still today experiencing the difficulty of overcoming similar problems arising from analogous causes among various ethnic minorities in the U.S.A., we should be prepared to see why this heritage cannot be forgotten overnight.

The ostensible end of the colonial era (1945-1975, focusing about 1960) and the beginning of national independence led to hopes of "freedom at last"; but these hopes have been rudely shattered, as the West continues to dominate the Two-Thirds World by the power of its technological development and its enormous affluence. Working hand in glove, Western governments and Western corporations have established de facto control over the economies of the poorer nations. The mechanisms involved include the contrast between the highly unstable prices of the raw primary commodities produced by the poor nations and the escalating prices of the finished products sold by the rich nations; the granting of loans at high interest rates, which burdens the bare treasuries of the poor countries, and with strings which ensure their use for purposes favorable to the wealthy nations' interests; and even the outright overt or covert intervention to "destabilize" unfavorable governments (e.g. Chile) and to establish or prop up oppressive regimes that favor the interests of wealthy countries at the expense of their own citizens. The poor countries are faced essentially with Hobson's choice: either they accept Western so-called "aid" and the burdens and controls it entails, or they opt for a meager level of self-reliance. In either case they find themselves unable to provide the basic services their peoples desperately need. The joint voices of the poor nations in the United Nations give them a forum, but their power is effectively neutralized by the vetoes of the big powers in the Security Council. So far, petroleum is the only commodity whose producers have been able in some measure to turn the tables on the rich nations by operating unitedly.

I have emphasized this point at such length because we must face the fact that, whatever our own attitudes and practices, this is the context in which we operate. Christian leaders in other countries are bright enough and informed enough to diagnose the problem; they are also aware that, by and large, the American Christian public sees nothing wrong with the present system. We are therefore obliged to prove ourselves before we can really win the trust which is the only basis on which interdependence can work.

Our conception of the task. A second area which causes us difficulties is how we understand the task and how we go about organizing and pursuing our goals. Here, ironically, it is the very abundance of certain kinds of resources in our hands which blinds us to potentially more fruitful ways of approaching the job. These matters are so intertwined that I will treat them together. We need to consider at least three aspects of this complex.

a. First of all, in almost all instances **we assume from the outset that *we* know what the task is and what the goals are.** These are already defined in our minds and in our corporate deliberations and projections well before nationals are involved at all. After all, the mission has been working in a given area for many years; it has—at least one hopes so—well defined goals; and of course it has set in motion processes and founded institutions and structures designed to achieve these goals. Seldom does one really open up all of these basic questions *de novo* when the national church or its agencies become involved. It is expected that they will work enthusiastically towards the goals we have set and take over willingly all the machinery we have built to reach them. My observation is that under such circumstances nationals at best feel ill at ease with the foreign patterns and institutions, and at worst completely uninterested and uninvolved. It is precisely this in turn which leads missions to conclude that nationals have no vision or initiative! We are, it seems, in a vicious circle. Way back in 1947 J. Merle Davis said, "The Western Church has made the mistake of girding the Eastern David in Saul's armor and putting Saul's

sword into his hands. Under these conditions the Church on the mission field has made a brave showing, but it is reasonable to expect that it will give a better account of itself by using its own familiar gear and weapons" (Davis 1947:108).

More recently, reflecting a Third-World perspective and 25 additional years of frustrating experience, Byang Kato wrote: "One mission complained about a national church that reluctantly accepted an elaborate medical program only to sell it to the government and use the money for the felt need. While one does not want to sit in judgment on such a case, it is apparent that local involvement was lacking at the beginning" (Kato 1972:199).

One could quite legitimately ask, Why *should* Third World church leaders simply take over from us without question all the precedents that we have established? Are we so nearly infallible, and they so ignorant, that completely unbroken continuity is the best way to save God's mission? I doubt it.

b. Second, **our affluence has led us to develop the ecclesiastical analog of capital-intensive methods of work.** In *our* economy, the most expensive thing is human time, and any procedure or equipment which saves human time is an improvement. We have thus developed methods and techniques which require the large amounts of money we have at our disposal, and we unthinkingly give others the impression that is *the* way to do Christian work. In most of the rest of the world, equipment is prohibitively expensive, and the cheapest and most abundant resource is human time and strength. But we bypass the resource in which nationals are rich and major on the ones which we have in abundance. In such a "partnership" it is inevitable that the partner with the most highly valued resource will dominate.

This dominance is further buttressed by our conviction, to which we hold at least as firmly as we do to our doctrinal positions, that "he who pays the piper calls the tune" (Kalu 1975a:16). In other words, we accept without question the capitalist premise that in any operation the dominant factor is and ought to be the capital input rather than the labor input. Under the guise of "accountability" and encouraged by our stereotypes about the undependability of nationals in money matters, we insist on retaining control of projects which we fund—including the covert control arising from the possibility of funds being cut off, the power of the implicit veto. I know of no single obstacle to true partnership than this attitude which we find so hard to relinquish. It is invariably mentioned when Third World Christians discuss partnership or church-mission relations (Nacpil 1971; Costas 1973:415; Kalu 1975b: Kato 1972:197; see also Strong 1972:286; Taber 1976).

At the root of the problem, I think, is our materialism. This can be seen among Western donors, who will far more readily give for a building or an airplane than for true human needs. It can be seen in our priorities in business meetings at all levels, from the local church to denominational conferences to the board meeting, where questions of money and property tend to dominate the agenda. And it is of course reflected in our ready judgment, conscious or unconscious, that people who are poor are less important than people who are rich, and that societies that do not major in the accumulation of material wealth are backward. That non-Westerners see this unlovely trait in us clearly is evident from two anecdotes. Loewen somewhere tells of a discussion with a group of Indians who told him that in their tradition the most important thing was spirits; but the Indians were learning from the missionaries to make money, not the Holy Spirit, the center of their lives. Some years ago, a missionary from Nigeria told me of a prominent American minister, well known in fundamentalistic circles, who visited Nigeria and spoke to a group of Nigerian ministers; the burden of his message was that because he served God, God had prospered him with a large salary, two cars, a big luxurious house, and so on. After the meeting, some of the Africans took my friend aside and asked him, "Is that man a Christian?"

c. Third is **our unbounded reliance on expertise, defined in technological terms and measured in years of formal schooling.** Our bemusement with expertise is reflected in our tacit assumption that *we* know how it ought to be organized, that *we* know how to plan and project and schedule. This, I think, is the reason we so spontaneously go about defining goals and methods unilaterally and only invite nationals to join in at a later stage. And if perchance we are willing to relinquish some of this technologically based power, it is because one or more of the nationals have been educated in the Western pattern and therefore have the same kind of expertise as we do. But not all missiologists are sure that this is a good idea. "Heaven save us," pleads John V. Taylor, "from an international Christian technocracy" (1971:337).

A subsidiary aspect of this attitude is our mania for specialization and compartmentalization. We have buildings which are used only on Sunday and other buildings which are never used on Sunday. By reflex the word "education" evokes for us a school, complete with specially designed building, specialized furniture and equipment, and specialized personnel. The word "worship," on the other hand, evokes a distinctive building, specialized furniture and equipment, and specialized personnel. This approach, especially as regards buildings and equipment, multiplies the cost of the total operation.

d. Fourth, **this bedazzlement with money and expertise has right from the start subverted true indigeneity in the church,** and it continues to do so. Huge areas of the work—education, health care, development programs, etc.—are without question and almost by definition beyond the effective control of local churches; they lack the funds to support them and the professionals to run them, and so by design or by default foreign funds support them and foreign experts control them. In at least one Mennonite field, Zaire, 80 percent of the church budget comes from overseas and is almost exclusively devoted to these para-church ministries and to the top-level administration of the church (Mutombo-Mpanya 1977). This situation, says Mutombo-Mpanya, results in tensions and jealousies between two classes of Christian workers: those engaged on local church ministries, who are supported at a modest level by their churches, and those

engaged in the glamorous and heavily subsidized service or administrative ministries, who are supported at a much higher level by foreign funds.

While Dennis Clark was not writing specifically about this issue, his observations are, I think, expremely pertinent: **The national staff member of a foreign-controlled mission faces serious problems. Financed and directed by a society heavily dominated by Westerners and whose first loyalty is to foreign supporters, he owes extraterritorial loyalties to that society. Often the result of this situation is alienation from local people. . . . It seems almost too late for Western societies to recruit the national because, with very few exceptions, the stigma of being labeled a "stooge" or "puppet" reduces usefulness. . . . The Western concept of "hiring and firing" overlooks the deep feeling of Christians in the Third World and can only attract "hirelings" who will flee when the wolf comes** (Clark 1971:207-208).

It is because of these difficulties that Kalu does not hesitate to call missionary education "an instrument of bondage" because "it bred marionettes in Church and State" (1975a:19).

To summarize: our approach to conceptualizing and organizing the task subverts true partnership because we unilaterally assume the right to define goals and methods, and because we rely on capital-intensive and technology-intensive patterns which put a premium on *our* resources rather than on the resources of the local church.

Cultural foundations. All of the problems I have already mentioned have cultural roots and cultural implications; however, I think it will be useful for us to isolate specifically four cultural factors which seem to me to be especially pertinent.

a. First is **our generally manipulative attitude toward our environment,** whether physical or social. We prize mastery, we reward the ambition to dominate, we regard the solution of problems by subjugating their causes as the best way to deal with them; "aggressive" is an adjective with highly favorable connotation. Perhaps the best metaphor for this attitude is the bulldozer. Three quotations underline this point: **Far from considering adjustments to environment a virtue, they (missionaries) believe the efficiency of their work depends on bending that environment** (Scott 1975:181). **Missionaries introduced a Western form of church based on a cash economy, and since the form did not fit the Philippine economy, they tried to fit the economy to the form by amateur aid programmes and employment in miniature industries** (Scott 1975:183).

A significant example of the contrast in method emerged during the preliminary planning of the first All Africa Churches' Conference, held at Ibadan in 1958. British and American "experts" had agreed that this was to be Africa's conference run in Africa's way. But when it appeared that the African leaders intended to have no agenda but to allow the findings to emerge from free, informal discussion, the experts felt constrained to take a hand, and once again Western methods prevailed (Taylor 1973:22n).

A special instance of this pragmatic, utilitarian, triumphalistic attitude is our view of time, which leads us to be extremely impatient. This no doubt springs from our culturally conditioned understanding of such passages as Ephesians 5:16 ("Redeeming the time. . . ," KJV) which we interpret to mean that we should not "waste time" but plow on ahead on a predetermined course no matter what. It is not clear to me that this is a universally valid interpretation; rather, it smacks of finding in the Bible justification for our own haste.

b. Second, I think, is **our culturally induced bluntness of manner,** our readiness to confront directly people with whom we disagree and to push our ideas against theirs. This cannot help giving us an undue advantage over people who are culturally more polite, whose culture requires them to be more reticent and more oblique, who are expected to "save face" and to avoid confrontations. When a national fails to tell us to our faces that he disagrees with us, we too easily jump to the conclusion that he agrees with us, and we rush ahead with our plans. We are not tuned in to the far more subtle clues which other cultures provide when people disagree.

c. Not unrelated is the expectation, which we share with most nationals, that **when cooperative programs and partnerships are initiated, it is the nationals who will adjust** in matters of language, life-style, and so forth; they must for the best results become culturally Westerners. It is a tribute to their resiliency and flexibility that so many can make the adjustment and operate successfully on our turf without losing their bearings on their own. But why should programs and activities planned for and carried out in a non-Western society be designed in a Western setting and a Western idiom? Why should *we* not be the ones to adjust our cultural style? Yet it hardly ever happens; we live in our cultural cocoon, and when we invite nationals to work with us, we invite them to a limited participation in our cocoon rather than venturing out of it to meet them on their ground. Scott has some scathing words about this as he describes the cultural insulation of missionaries: "Unless he (the missionary) gets out of that spacesuit, he will never be able to cry on a Filipino shoulder, lock arms with a Filipino brother on a steep path, or taste the salt of Filipino tears" (1975:172).

d. Finally, I suggest that **the very title of our discussion reflects a Western bias:** "*Structures* and *strategies* for interdependence." Would not an African or an Asian look first to *relationships* between persons as the locus of success or failure? True, the relationships have been systematically undermined or destroyed by the factors of power and culture described above, and an African like Kalu recognizes this explicitly. And he would even insist that attention must be given to establishing a sounder systemic basis for fraternal relationships. But the systemic is the means to the relationship, not the other way around. What we should be seeking is *first,* a basis on which to build concrete and genuine expressions of our international *koinonia;* and *second,* approaches to doing a job.

Some Attempts at Solutions

I mentioned above that a number of attempts have been

made recently to solve the problem and establish true partnership. At this point I will examine a few of these briefly.

United Methodist Church. The United Methodist effort is described by Harris and Patterson (1975). Under the rubric "Building Community in Mission," they mention nine programs or activities which their Board of Global Ministries and their churches are involved in: international itinerating teams in U.S. churches, recognition that education for mission is mission, involvement of U.S. ethnic minorities in global mission, development of more flexible patterns of U.S. missionary service, exploration of patterns for mission in the U.S., affirmation of the increased interest of the laity in missionary service, support for people in mission in their own countries, encouragement of the internationalization of the missionary presence, and participation in support of people's networks. All of these things are highly commendable; but aside from their being often expressions of aspiration rather than of reality, they reflect, as far as I can see. a totally unilateral view of the initiatives to be taken. There seems to be a minimum of involvement by non-Western Christians in the planning of the effort and little wrestling with the deep level problems I have described.

The KKKMI. The KKKMI (Strong 1972) is a group of European agencies working in Indonesia. Strong actually lists a number of caveats and recommendations rather than describing an ongoing program. For instance, he differentiates between "partnerships where one partner is strong and one is weak; where one partner is silent; partnership with limited liability; and partnership where everything is held in common, such as a family with a joint banking account" (281). In discussing the slogan of the KKKMI ("Today we are partners"), he asks "whether it is a statement of fact or hope" (281). He points out that the very term "churches overseas" creates an unhelpful dichotomy (282). When a mission and a church are partners, he says, there will be tensions, since each has by definition a different focus of interest; it is necessary that each have a policy to guide its work, and both policies apply to the same arena; when the policies differ, which should prevail? The situation is exacerbated when a board insists on uniform policies in a number of fields where the churches may have different policies. Strong feels that the board secretary is in the crucial position to make or break the partnership. By means of a pointed question, he suggests that churches ought to be involved in the selection of missionaries. Finally, he emphasizes the difficulty involved when "we all want to receive unearmarked money but tend to want to pass it on earmarked" (286).

The Lutheran Church in America. Vikner (1974) describes the work of the LCA. He offers as a framework for the history of the LCA missions the usual three-stage model: missionary dominance, local autonomy, and interdependence. But he still clearly takes it for granted that the LCA will unilaterally determine its role and its priorities in the world.

Conservative Baptists. Jacques (1973) outlines in some detail the approach of the Conservative Baptists in India, and especially in the Philippines. What emerged out of a history of tensions was a structure of "equal partnership" in which the mission and the fellowship of churches, each autonomous, agreed to work together through a system of committees in which they had equal representation (the "business committee," however, which is responsible for "the internal concerns of the mission, such as missionary housing, car, furlough and administration" remains unilaterally the prerogative of the mission). The two partners contribute financially as each is able to a joint budget. A lengthy document entitled "An Agreement for the Cooperative Stage of Nationalization of Conservative Baptist Work in the Philippines" spells out the name, the purpose, the goals, the members, the officers, the responsibilities, and so forth. Apparently the nationals were far more involved in the initial planning here than in the cases mentioned above. Though Jacques claims that the system works, it seems to me that there remains a good bit of insistence on the respective autonomy of the cooperating bodies, of keeping each other at arm's length, of leaning over backward to make sure each has exactly half of everything. To be sure, this is much better than fighting; but it is not true partnership in my understanding of the term. And the design of the whole scheme is extremely Western.

Joint Apostolic Action in Dahomey. Ayivi (1972) describes a cooperative effort called *L'Action Apostolique au Dahomey.* Proposed originally by Pastor Jean Kotto, general secretary of the Evangelical Church of Cameroun, it joins in a common project the Paris Missionary Society and a number of churches in francophone West Africa. The focus of the project was to send a joint team representative of the churches involved and incorporating a diversity of technical skills and specializations (theology, social work, education, nursing, agronomy, etc.), to one of the more resistant societies in West Africa, the Fon of Dahomey (now Republic of Benin). The threefold objectives were the development of the whole human being, the creation of a new form of Christian community, and to relate African culture to the gospel. I do not have detailed or recent information on this effort; but though Ayivi in 1972 was cautiously optimistic, it is my impression that the effort has lost its elan. It is possible that the continued resistance of Fon society was a factor; I have also heard that the members of the team were not fully able to coordinate their efforts to work toward well-understood joint goals. At any rate, the project today is not living up to original hopes.

The Latin America Mission. The fullest and most satisfactory definition of partnership I have seen is that of Roberts (1973) concerning the Latin American Mission. In some respects they had already achieved some of the positions that others only hoped for, but they were still not satisfied. Roberts points out that preparation for this advance went back to 1950 when the late Kenneth Strachan began insisting on eliminating racial discrimination between Latins and North Americans at all levels of

the LAM. But, says Roberts, this was not enough: "Latin American leaders tended to become frustrated. Instead of the rest of us becoming more Latin American in our attitudes and administrative style, the Latin missionaries were forced to conform to North American standards of candidate screening, missionary support, deputation activities, executive procedures and administrative style" (338).

Finally, a joint consultation was held in January 1971 at which the majority were Latins. Roberts recalls, **Perhaps most important of all, . . . we learned . . . that the process of "latinamericanization" . . . did not consist simply in the recruitment of Latin Americans to serve side by side with us. We discovered that an organization might have 90 percent Latin Americans and still be a thoroughly "gringo" structure. . . . The key, we found, is in the decision-making process. This process must be shifted to Latin America and controlled by Latin Americans if the organization is to become truly autochthonous** (339-340).

One aspect of the overall reorganization is a high measure of decentralization, and the granting of a high degree of autonomy to the various specialized ministries and institutions formerly operated by the LAM. The umbrella organization is the Community of Latin American Evangelical Ministries.

Roberts discusses frankly problems involved in determining budgets, public relations (especially with the US supporting constituency), personnel, and the transfer of properties. He mentions a tendency for divisiveness among the components of CLAME and difficulty in establishing solid internal communications.

The weakest part of the scheme, from my perspective, and one which makes the model less useful than it might otherwise be, is failure to mention the role of *churches* in the whole operation. This is a failure one might expect from the "faith mission" context; yet it is in my view a grave weakness in the pattern.

Summary. As I read these accounts, I am struck by the persistence of the underlying difficulties. They seem to have numerous incarnations and to surface in many manifestations. In summarizing this section of my paper, I can do no better than quote three people who have faced the issues involved very concretely. After a discussion of the old-fashioned direct control via the purse strings, Orlando Costas says, "While much of this may be changing, there are signs that point in the direction of more subtle, indirect controls. This may be seen even among the most advanced and progressive mission organizations. Even though they may have handed over all administrative and strategic control, their leaders always manage somehow to get their way" (1973:414).

Tom Hanks, a student worker in Latin America vividly underlines the difficulty: **I had thought of paternalism as a deadly thing which I must be very careful not to create in my relations with students, instead of recognizing that it is the dominant, strangling pattern of relationships that exists in the church in Latin America. It is not that the student worker must be wise enough not to create such a monster. Rather he must be courageous enough to destroy the monster that now exists. . . . Anyone who has read or seen the film of Elsa, the lion who was "Born Free," knows it is infinitely easier to leave an animal free than to domesticate it and then try to teach it to be "indigenous." . . . You may even convince yourself that you have an indigenous student work—with students dashing all over putting your ideas into practice. Then dawns the day when you ask yourself, "But when was the last time they came up with a good original idea and carried it out?" and you realize it is not that they can't, it's that I'm dominating** (1972:153-154, 156, 157).

Finally, Emerito Nacpil explains why despair at this point led him to call for a moratorium on missionaries and foreign funds: **Of course, we can argue that we are not limited to these alternatives (with respect to whether the missionary serves mission or church, etc.). Instead, we can become partners—partners in obedience, joint participants in a common enterprise. But can we really? If we can, under present conditions, it can only be (and so far this seems to be the case) a partnership between the weak and the strong. And that means the continued dependence of the weak upon the strong, and the continued dominance of the strong over the weak, notwithstanding our efforts and protestations to the contrary. Under this kind of partnership, the missionary becomes the apostle of affluence, not sacrifice; cultural superiority, not Christian humility; technological efficiency, not human identification; white supremacy, not human liberation and community** (1971:359).

I suppose one could sum up the whole matter in terms of the well-known recipe for elephant-rabbit stew: you take one elephant and one rabbit. It should not surprise us that the "50-50" stew in fact tastes more of elephant than of rabbit!

Dimensions of a Solution

I am not in a position to offer you a well-integrated model of the ideal form of interdependence. I can, however, suggest some features which I think will characterize any successful model.

Mutual trust. Fundamental to any success is a climate of mutual trust, respect, and genuine Christian love (i.e. love shorn of its paternalistic, condescending dimension), based on an understanding of the *koinonia* God intends for the whole body. Since this is basic, and since we easily confuse biblical ideals with concrete achievement, I want to quote Ogbu Kalu briefly: **It seems quite clear that no amount of tinkering with the present pattern will work. A missionary may be fully aware of the theological nature of the Church as the Body of Christ and the biblical pattern of interrelationships as one of mutual responsibility and interdependence. Yet he cannot avoid being paternalistic. The source of paternalism in mission is the structure of the enterprise itself** (1975b:143-144).

In other words, it is far from enough to realize fully the theological-biblical dimensions of a solution; we have to work in the concrete situation to find concrete expressions for the spiritual reality, which implies, for Kalu, the demolition of a system which inherently works at cross-purposes with the biblical pattern. It is this fact, according to Kalu, which underlies calls for moratorium, not in rejection of the Great Commission, but in explicit obedience to it. Only when the young churches are given breathing room, when the inherently oppressive presence

of the mission is removed or relaxed, can they find their true role in the ministry of the total body.

Local decision making. It is crucial that decision making be focused in the place and on the persons who will be most directly involved. In other words, partnership involves each partner group having *primary* responsibility and authority in their own sphere, and *then* helping others in their spheres (Arias 1971:252). In other words, just as we do not expect African Christians to take unilateral or even primary initiatives with regard to churches in the U.S., so we should not arrogate to ourselves the right to initiate decisions and programs in other parts of the world. Kalu underlines this when he says, "The nature of the Universal Church means that aid relationships among churches must be different from aid relationships among nations. If there is to be real sharing-in-common, there must be sharing-in-common of power" (1975a:22).

As long as Westerners remain effectively in charge of designing the program, there will continue to be difficulties with the *model* of development used, and with the *mode* and *priority* of aid.

At this point I would like to comment on the suggestions of Calvin Shenk (1977) and Gerald Keener (1977). Shenk suggests the substitution of multilateral relations for bilateral ones. There is much value in this, but it is not by itself a full solution. The United Bible Societies entered into a radically centralized system called the World Service Budget for the express purpose of obviating the patron-client relationship between the big societies and local offices and specific projects overseas. But it turned out that the dominance of the big societies remained securely in place, as Bible Society operations that received funds from the World Service Budget, even in countries with "autonomous" Bible Societies that were full members of the UBS, were subject to line-by-line review or veto by UBS executives, while the societies which were financially self-supporting did as they pleased. Efforts were made to modify this invidious distinction by making the financial operations of the big societies open for inspection, but there was never any question of bringing them under the tutelage of the UBS. The same distinction exists today in the appointment of senior personnel: ABS or BFBS can appoint whom they please to any internal post, but the Bible Society of Ghana cannot appoint a general secretary without the approval of the UBS.

Keener's proposal that *churches* enter into direct partnership across the seas is also good, but by itself a bit idealistic. Churches separated not only by thousands of miles but by enormous cultural gulfs need knowledgeable brokers to establish and maintain sound communications. Granting the fact that the churches are the fundamental reality, mission agencies can usefully serve this linking function if they are properly set up to do it.

Encouraging local initiative. Following from the above, we need to encourage nationals to take the lead in determining the most fundamental goals and methods of operation. We need to ask them, and press them for an answer. "What do *you* think are the tasks of the church?" And when they have sorted out *their* understanding of their mandate from God, we will need to encourage them to design methods which are appropriate to their setting and their resources. This will need to be done with all aspects of the work. If, for instance, they decide that the church needs to have educational activities, they need to be free to question whether this implies a school in our sense at all. In this game, we need to realize that by definition *they,* not we, are the experts; our expertise relates to a very different world, and is, as we have seen above, often a hindrance rather than a help when exported.

I realize that we cannot actually start with a blank slate on which to write beautiful new programs; we cannot at once eliminate all the mistakes of the past. At this point I can only repeat my advice in *The Other Side:* **A truly Christian approach in the field will begin with the mission taking the initiative. Mission boards need to approach their national churches with the following kinds of statements:**

1. We acknowledge and confess that our financial operations are sub-Christian. Please forgive us.

2. Let us together examine the whole program which we have instituted, most of which was instituted without consulting you. Let us prayerfully see which parts of the program have been genuinely helpful to you and which parts exist only because some missionary might be offended if they were discontinued. Let us see which parts of the program you would have instituted on your own initiative if we had not been in control.

3. Let us with all deliberate speed eliminate those programs which do not contribute sufficiently to the well-being of the church to justify their cost in money and freedom of action.

4. Let us plan how the remaining programs can reflect the Holy Spirit's leading in this specific sociocultural and historical situation. You take the initiative since this is your church under God. We are God's servants for your sake.

5. Finally, let's discuss finances honestly, see what is needed, and discover together where it will come from—how much from local sources, how much from outside. We pledge to you that we will truly relinquish control (Taber 1976:43-44).

Giving without strings. The last sentence spells out the next feature of a successful partnership: that giving be truly without strings. This was implicit in the quotation from Kalu on church aid; it is underlined by this deeply felt statement of Byang Kato: **If foreign aid is to help rather than hinder the work of the Lord, it must be given as unto the Lord and received as God's money. There must be a strong element of trust all around. . . . Missionaries . . . should have confidence in the nationals. The commonly heard phrase, "You cannot trust the national," must be dropped and humble repentance offered for the past action** (1972:197).

The only way this can be put into effect, I think, is for us to repent of and grow out of our materialism, that materialism which leads us to grossly overestimate the importance of the financial component of the operation (what we contribute) and to underestimate the value of the human component (what nationals contribute), the materialism that in the name of "accountability" will not

relinquish control of programs to which we have given money, the materialism that prevents us from trusting nationals.

Can we become poor? Perhaps an even greater revolution of values is called for. Weiser, in a tantalizing allusion (1975:134), suggests that Jesus in Luke 9:3 ("Take nothing with you for the trip . . .") had in mind a purpose relevant to our discussion: "With all the necessary allowances made for the different socioeconomic context of the Gospels this injunction to the disciples seems to be designed to put them into a state of extraordinary powerlessness in any economic context." This raises the question for us: is it possible for us to really become functionally poor and weak in our dealings with Third World churches? What would we have to renounce in a very concrete way to free these churches from our overwhelming combination of powers which oppress them: the history of colonial relations, our financial affluence, our technological expertise, and our assumption—which they are in no position to deny effectively—that these powers give us the right to determine their destiny?

Epilogue

After the discussion of my paper in Hillsboro, I feel constrained to make explicit two points which were implicit in my thinking but which obviously did not come through to everyone.

First, the reason I shied away from becoming more specific in proposing solutions is precisely because, beyond the generalities I outlined, each situation is to a great extent unique, and solutions must be sought in *concrete* contexts and in interaction with *specific* persons and groups. There would have been a remainder of subtle imperialism in our sitting as a group of North Americans in Hillsboro and offering universal solutions to be applied. A crucial part of the solution is the dialogue process by which the solution is discovered and applied, and one cannot predict from a distance what will emerge. One must play it by ear (to speak in purely human terms), or be sensitive to the contextual guidance of the Holy Spirit (to use biblical categories); and the guidance must come to the persons and groups involved in *joint* prayer, confession, and discussion.

Second, in spite of my harping on problems and difficulties, I am essentially optimistic about *possibilities;* but my optimism is not based on our insight or our technical competence, but only on God's grace. I cannot be triumphalistic about solving problems through scholarship and expertise, because if I am, these will become yet more tools of manipulation. But I can and do have confidence in God to transcend our limitations and sins. The condition on our part is repentance for our sins. We have a tendency to want to pass through this stage quickly and to see in advance a blueprint for a happy outcome beyond the repentance to make it worthwhile; otherwise, we feel, the repentance will have been in vain! However, biblical repentance cannot be instrumental in that sense; it dare not be minimized or bypassed, and there is no guarantee of "success" on the other side. But we also need to see that *metanoia* is not self-flagellation or wallowing in guilt (which would lead to self-pity and eventually to self-congratulation!); rather, it is an honest facing up to our guilt, a repudiation of the sinful patterns (which will have systemic and structural consequences, as Kalu pointed out), and a determination to look ahead to the *possible* future God has in store for us (first person plural inclusive, i.e. Western and non-Western Christians). In other words, *metanoia* is a liberation from the shackles of past sins and *for* a better future. But we need to realize that our non-Western partners, not being able to see our hearts as well as God does, may take more convincing than God does that we mean what we say. So they may put us to the test in a variety of ways. But I firmly believe in the vision of "one new humanity" that John Toews so ably outlined for us.

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REVERENCING GOD'S IMAGE

Paul M. Miller

Introduction

God has given to humankind two great commissions. He gave to all people His first command to fill and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28). To His people, the disciples of His son Jesus Christ, He gave His second great commission to evangelize the people on the earth.

In His commission to evangelize, God emphasized discipling rather than merely going. Christians are to be making disciples as they go (Mt. 28:19) by liberating people from the enslaving powers of evil (Mk. 16), by creating everywhere forgiving communities where God's presence and power prevail (Lk. 24:47), by following Christ's own example in making disciples (Jn. 20:21), by acting on the commission of the ascended Christ himself (Acts 1:8). Always the imperative is **to make disciples**—not feverish going, going, going. Disciple-making should condition all that Christians do wherever they go.

In obeying God's first Great Commission to "fill and subdue the earth" (Gen. 1:28), God's people must make central what He made central. Otherwise they may wreck God's earth while attempting to subdue it and overfill the earth while attempting to fill it. God gave a supreme test to men and women: every effort to fill or subdue the earth should reverence the image of God in every human being. This will be still more true as humankind learns to subdue the atoms of the earth while seeking safeguards from both atom bombs and atomic pollution.

Since I use the image of God in the human being as the basis of my entire plea that "development" be undertaken with reverence for that image, it is fitting that I define what I mean by the image of God. The Bible does not offer such a definition. The biblical writers assume that because of the image of God, human beings have certain capacities not shared with subpersonal creatures. To be made in the image of God means having the ability to commune with God, to think God's thoughts after Him, weighing the consequences. God's image enables a character that is moral, an inner self which will endure forever, and the ability to think and act in a finite way somewhat as God does in an infinite and perfect way. Those who are sensitive to God's image within them are not only reverent but can ponder their own death and eternal destiny. The image of God enables people to become responsible stewards of the earth for God, its Creator.

Reverence God's Image as You Fill the Earth with People

God gave this command when the earth was empty, when space, soil, air, and resources seemed unlimited. But what does it mean to reverence God's image in people now crowded together in Hong Kong? Overfilling God's earth with people until they must starve or stand on one another's shoulders gasping for a little of the polluted air is not respecting God's image in every human being. The second billion riders on spaceship earth were added in 100 years' time, but we produced the third billion riders in only 15 years, and the race toward catastrophe is still gaining speed. The divine image is not reverenced if human beings are herded into near starvation.

Filling the earth—guided by a deep reverence for the image of God—will demand that riders on spaceship earth move quickly and with fairness toward "zero population growth." Even now ethically concerned couples may forego their own desires to beget children and decide instead to adopt underprivileged infants already here. To reverence the image of God, the concern must always be for the quality of existence, the quality of opportunity, the quality of relationship, rather than merely to increase the quantity of people who are alive.

Reverence God's Image as You "Keep His Garden" and as You "Subdue and Have Dominion over His Earth" (Gen. 2:15, 1:28)

Entirely too many settlers ruthlessly pushed back the natives, "bought" their lands and ancestral burying grounds for a few trinkets, and wrote deeds of ownership and colonial empires for themselves. They acted as if the land were empty, ownerless, theirs for the taking. They pushed the people living there back to "reserves," "reservations," "homelands" of the least desirable desert or mountainous terrain. To make matters worse, they often justified their robbery by telling themselves that they were, after all, God's chosen people, God's favored children, entitled to more of the earth's bounties than others. Or else they said they had earned it. Such mistreatment of the Indians in North America is one shameful example.

After the takeover settlers often began to exploit forests, minerals, streams, and resources systematically. Strip mining reduced once beautiful hills to unsightly heaps of refuse. Much of the plundering of the earth's crust was done to pamper the few rich people of the earth with vastly more than their share of earth's treasures. The most rapid squandering of irreplaceable resources often occurred during wars, when people made in God's image were killing one another, scorching one another's earth, and destroying property.

Men and women should use God's image within them, His own sense of what it is to do justly and to love kindness, before they go on developing and subduing the earth until air and ocean are polluted. God's first great

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commission commanded humankind to have dominion over the fish of the sea. At present, oceans which cover 70 percent of earth's surface provide less than 2 percent of our food. Can we be wiser stewards as we begin to "farm the oceans" for food for the world's hungry? But our methods must be those of good stewards, too. For example, present methods of whaling must be corrected.

Leading environmentalists suggest that if all the earth's acreage were tilled with the meticulous care which Dutch or Taiwanese farmers use, spaceship earth could feed 28 billion riders. But people who value supremely the image of God within their fellow human beings worry about much more than mere need for food. They need space, privacy, freedom, solitude, the beauty of nature's mountains and sunsets, and many other aesthetic and spiritual values which are lost when overcrowding occurs.

Christians should be leaders in concern about ecology. A radically simple, unpampered life-style should accompany a prophetic protest against waste and conspicuous consumption. John V. Taylor's *Enough Is Enough,* E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful,* D. H. Meadows' *The Limits of Growth,* and other such books should be on the required reading list for concerned Christians round the world. Exodus and Deuteronomy are needed, too, to see Jehovah's concern for ecology.

Christians who sincerely reverence the image of God in every human being should lead out in challenging the wasteful nations of the developed West to move their standard of living down and to decrease their use of nonreplaceable materials. Earth simply could not bear the strain if all the people of Asia and Africa would insist upon consuming the amount the affluent now consume. The only way the Third World can develop is if the developed nations are willing to share alike what is aboard spaceship earth. An "intermediate technology," rather than the ponderous technology of the West, may be the realistic hope of Third World development.

Reverence God's Image as You "Name" the Animals (Gen. 2:19)

God's image within human beings forever sets a gulf between them and the animals. Humans can name animals but they cannot ascertain the human individual's uniqueness and assign an appropriate name. Among all the animals there is no "helpmeet" for man. No animal can look a man or woman in the eye, on the level, and say "thou." The animal kingdom can only groan and wait, along with the entire groaning creation, until people claim their true liberty as children of God (Rom. 8:19-23).

Because of God's image within human beings, they will copy God's concern for the animals, try to give them Edenic conditions as much as possible, forbid any cruelty to animals, and use their help in subduing the earth and providing food for humankind and animals upon the earth.

It is an irreverent denial of the image of God within human beings to pretend that only a small evolutionary mutation separates animals from people. Only people can hear God's call and respond in speech; only they can covenant in a purposeful partnership with God; only they can premeditate their death and their eternal existence before the face of their creator; only they can lay plans in partnership with God to redeem those who have gone astray; only they can oppose the demonic principalities and powers which oppose the reign of God.

Reverence the Image of God as Man Honors Woman

Only woman possesses the image of God in full equality with man (Gen. 1:27). Only woman shares with him the first great commission to subdue and fill the earth. In fact, she is the "glory" of man (1 Cor. 11:7), since she was made from finer stuff than man: she was made from flesh and bone, but he merely from dust! She is man's helper, as God is, coming to aid him from his noblest side. She is his equal in every way; "bone of my bone" meant that to the original hearers.

Christian men, respecting the image of God and the noble "helper" status of women, should lead all mankind in putting an end to the "lower estate" of women. They should challenge the false notions of their culture as Jesus did those of the rabbis. A man should be willing to leave his clan, his father and mother, to found a new home in full equality with a woman partner. A man should not insist that only the woman must leave her clan to come and cleave to him. Jesus insisted upon this elevating of woman (Mt. 19:4-6) and anchored it in the divine will in the Creation (Gen. 2:23).

The rabbis refused to instruct women, but Jesus gave some of His richest teaching to Mary, Martha, and the Samaritan woman. The rabbis stressed the uncleanness of the woman with the issue of blood, but Jesus touched her. The rabbis said women were not reliable as witnesses, but Jesus made them first witnesses of His resurrection. The rabbis kept women out of the inner courts of temple and synagogue, but Jesus made women's homes centers for His teaching. He accepted financial support from women. He praised Mary for believing in His resurrection in her anointing of His body for burying, while the Twelve refused to hear His talk of death. Jesus' attitude and behavior toward women conformed to the Creator's intention for them.

The early apostles followed Jesus' lead in honoring the full image of God in woman. Lydia and other women became "patrons" of the early house churches and were accorded the honor and influence accompanying that position. The apostles believed the prophet's prediction that both sons and daughters will have the Holy Spirit poured upon them and will prophesy. The first bishop, Timothy, was instructed in the faith by two women, Lois and Eunice, and not at an all-male rabbinical college. The all-male deaconate of Acts 6 moved quickly to include deaconesses in the congregation at Ephesus (1 Tim. 5:9). The enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit given to women were honored equally with those given to men.

Even though the apostles had to make temporary concessions to the sub-Christian cultural patterns around them and had to ask women to keep silent in the carnal congregation at Corinth (1 Cor. 14:34), they always emphasized the enduring principle that woman is the glory of man (1 Cor. 11:7). Before Paul made concessions that women must be subject to men, he insisted that subjection has to be mutual, practiced equally by both men and women (Eph. 5:21). As another enduring principle, Paul asserted that where people partake of the new reality "in Christ," man's status is not higher than

woman's, Jew is not higher than Greek, free person is not higher than slave (Gal. 3:28).

Reverence God's Image as You Accept God's Laws and Moral Limits

In Genesis 3:2-3 God decreed, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." People using other standards allow selfishness to set the limits, or the law of the land, or the law of supply and demand, or loyalties to country, clan, or race. But Christians who reverence the image of God in everyone live according to the limits which God set, limits that protect others' humanness and dignity.

God gave humanity His divine image, and He wills that human dignity be respected. He set a pattern with His people, Israel. Israel was to respect the image of God in strangers and never oppress them (Ex. 12:49). Israel was to respect God's image in Gentiles by creating a court of the Gentiles in the temple. They were to respect the image of God in the refugee, to set apart "cities of refuge" (Josh. 20:1-9). They were to respect the image of God in the bankrupt by observing the Year of Jubilee which restored lost land (Lev. 25:10-12). They were to respect the image of God in the poor, by leaving the corners of their fields ungleaned (Lev. 25:1-7).

God's people led the world in ecological concern. They protected their land with sabbatical years, their landless by providing housing for them, their price levels by offering the highest priced first fruits to God. Laws concerning diet and sanitation were linked with the highest laws of life and worship.

Because of their respect for the image of God in every person, God's people will want to see that justice is observed in competition and trade; they will love their neighbors as themselves. The awareness of God's image in others provides a strong incentive—perhaps the strongest—to counteract human selfishness. Our only hope of true justice lies in evoking, calling out, respecting, and reverencing this image.

Reverence God's Image as You Try to Relieve the Effects of the Fall

Genesis 3:16-19 outlines four results of the fall. Woman will experience pain in childbirth. Woman's desire will be to her husband, and he will tend to dominate her. The ground will be cursed and will tend to yield thorns and thistles. People will have to engage in grueling, sweaty toil, and their death and return to dust will be hastened.

All of these results of the curse must be worked against with equal vigor. All of them belittle God's image, and they need to be relieved. It was a stupid theologian who said woman should never be given pain relievers during childbirth since she must experience her curse fully! It is equally stupid to argue that thistles should not be removed in cultivating, or that man's toil should not be made easier.

Christians who reverence the image of God will work against man's tendency to dominate woman with the same vigor with which they eradicate thistles! The sweat shops of the industrial revolution in the West, the unhealthy conditions of mines—these hasten our return to dust and so should arouse Christian concern and action. Reverence for God's image provides the passion.

Reverence God's Image as You Compete with Your Brothers and Sisters

In Genesis 4:8-16 Cain the farmer collided with Abel the herdsman. The herdsman always wants free range for his grazing herds, and the farmer always wants fences to restrict their grazing. This conflict has led to violence throughout human history. The Masai herdsmen still collide with the nearby Luo farmers.

In the temptation to violence which competition always brings, we must begin with the recognition that the divine image is also present in the competitor, that we should bring the temptation before God in worship and offer to Him the first fruits of our toil. If competition has aroused murderous hate, bringing the offering before God will lay bare the secret thoughts and intentions of the heart: "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt. 5:23-24).

Cain left his altar to go and murder his brother! Millions since then have become violent in economic competition and have gone out in wars and murdered their brothers. That is why the very earth is cursed (Gen. 4:11-12). There can be no peace if competition is not curbed and its violence removed. Humanity cannot prosper where herdsman and farmer cannot cooperate. Competition is only safe where people live in unbroken awareness of God.

Heroes of faith like Abel will lead out by their trust and willingness to be vulnerable. They will go out into the field to assess the damage their way of life causes their competitors (Gen. 4:8), and they will lift their business before the living God in worship to see if He is pleased with it (Gen. 4:3-7). People who reverence God's image in competitors can never kill them. God insists that we call our competitor our brother or sister.

People who reverence the image of God in others will refuse to treat any person in an unbrotherly or unsisterly fashion. God insists that we are to be our brothers' keepers, despite governments that try to instill hate for brothers in "enemy" nations. By overcoming evil with good, God's people should transform the enemy into a friend. Jesus told His disciples to go the second mile, turn the other cheek, overcome evil with good; His life and death provide us with examples.

God "set a mark" on Cain, the violent one, to prevent the backlash of counter-violence (Gen. 4:15). Violence always tends to beget violence, which degrades every person made in God's image who stoops to use it. Even God's favorite king, David, was not allowed to build God's temple because he was a man of bloodshed. Violence spoils God's ecosystem.

God's "eye for an eye" and "tooth for a tooth" instruction was one means to prevent violence from escalating. The horror and tragedy of history is that all too often those who professed to be God's people have led out in the most awful wars: the Crusades, the Thirty Years' War, World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, and the war in Ireland.

When will Christians learn that the voice of innocent blood shed by violence cries out to God from the ground? When will Christians, who claim to believe that the image

of God is present in every person, cease to regard their brothers and sisters as enemies? Will the Christians in the U.S.A. keep guilty silence again if their tax money pays for 90,000 tons of chemicals to defoliate 6,000,000 acres of a neighbor's farmland as happened in Vietnam?

Reverence God's Image as Development Tends to Increase Violence

In Genesis 4:17-24 development seemed to be moving along in an ideal way. Humanity was diversifying and people were becoming skilled in specialties that should complement and support one another. One clan was forging instruments of bronze and iron, another was breeding cattle, and a third was developing the arts by designing and playing lyres and pipes. How idyllic it all should be, and how beautiful to see the progress of development!

But suddenly the inevitable competitions inherent in development flared up. Lamech snarled to his wives his decision to protect himself by "balanced terror," by "overkill": "I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold" (Gen. 4:23-24). Lamech practiced the military science of overkill: threaten everyone with massive and disproportionate retaliation so that all live in fear. Thus violence tends to escalate, dehumanizing all and filling the earth (Gen. 6:11) so that God must bring the flood.

When development becomes such a passion and preoccupation that people forget to bring the fruits of their toil before God in worship for His testing, when people refuse to be vulnerable before their competitor-brother/sister, then development brings violence and inhumanity. Only as people reverence the image of God in others until everyone becomes a brother/sister as sacred and inviolable before God as oneself—only then—can people compete, subdue the earth and fill it, honor woman, and diversify properly in development.

A TANTALIZING IDEA

When William Carey published *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* in 1791, he had no idea his little book would become the charter for modern missions. Carey devoted the bulk of the *Enquiry* to arguing for obedience to Christ's commission and to describing the late eighteenth-century world. Carey's *Enquiry* made its impact at this point: it aroused great interest in the missionary task. Carey convinced many people both that mission was possible and that obedience to Christ required it.

In one brief section Carey treated the question of method and strategy. "It might be necessary," suggested Carey, ". . . for two, at least, to go together, and in general I should think it best that they should be married men, and to prevent their time from being employed in procuring necessaries, two, or more, other persons, with their wives and families, might also accompany them, who should be wholly employed in providing for them." Carey went on to suggest that they should support themselves and engage in mission as a community rather than as isolated individuals.

No one else paid attention to Carey's blueprint at this point, but he and his colleagues proceeded to put it into practice in India. When they finally made permanent settlement at Serampore in January 1800, William Ward wrote in his diary: "This week we have adopted a set of rules for the government of the family. All preach and pray in turn; one superintends the affairs of the family for a month, and then another; brother Carey is treasurer, and has the regulation of the medicine chest; brother Fountain is librarian. Saturday evening is devoted to adjusting differences, and pledging ourselves to love one another. One of our resolutions is, that no one of us do engage in private trade; but that all be done for the benefit of the mission." The Serampore Mission operated under a "Form of Agreement" which spelled out all phases of the community's life as well as its relations to the parent society in London. The Agreement was so successful that the Brotherhood remained intact throughout the lifetime of Carey and his closest associates. Within the first two years they had repaid all the monies advanced to them by their missionary society and were economically independent.

Carey had self-consciously borrowed this missionary method from the Moravians because he respected them profoundly. Moravian missions were launched in 1732 when David Nitschmann and Leonhard Dober organized a mission to African slaves on the island of St. Thomas. Nitschmann provided the team's economic support by doing carpentry. This pattern became standard among the Moravians; each team worked out a self-support arrangement. The model enabled the Moravians to expand into various parts of the world throughout the eighteenth century.

The Basel Missionary Society provides the only other historical example of a mission agency which made economic activity integral to its approach. In 1846 the Mission organized the Basel Mission Trading Company to carry forward a growing economic enterprise. The Basel Mission emphasized economic activities that supported the mission's work and provided economic opportunity for the local community—Christian as well as non-Christian.

Sometimes missionaries established colonies as havens for converts who were persecuted by surrounding society. The pioneer Mennonite missionary to Java, Pieter Jansz,

conceived such a colonization scheme after he observed the opposition young Christians faced in North Central Java from Muslim society. He published a 116-page pamphlet in 1874 describing the purposes, patterns, and means of support for such a colony. Jansz' home board turned down his appeal, refusing to pay even the cost for printing the booklet.

These examples suggest several themes. The Moravians and Basel Mission Society believed that economic development was as integral to missionary purpose as education and medicine. Their missionaries were committed to improving the total life and well-being of the Christian community. Furthermore, experience proved how important it was for both missionary and local church to be independent of outside funds. Wars between the European powers during the nineteenth century had little effect on missions and churches which were economically self-sustaining. Carey stressed identification with the local community in all realms of life. For him the Brotherhood was the nucleus for a growing church. Colonizing to shield converts from persecution generally failed and most strategists rejected the idea.*

John H. Yoder made two observations when he surveyed the modern missionary movement in *As You Go* (1961).** First, Christian expansion historically has resulted largely from spontaneous lay movements as Christian traders and artisans have migrated from one community to another. Second, the modern missionary movement is unique—within Christian history—and represents a development fitted to a particular political and economic context. The "mission system" itself mirrors important features of the colonial era. According to the trading company-colony model, the mission society sends and supports with foreign funds a contingent of agents who in turn establish a church in another country.

Yoder challenged the church to reconsider its system and strategies. Why not, he suggested, replace methods and strategies which are a product of colonialism with methods and strategies which history has proven effective and which are free from the taint of Western domination of the Third World? Yoder argued for "migration evangelism": committed Christians would leave their homeland and cast their lot with a new people "for the sake of the gospel."

Christian history attested to the validity of the approach and the post World War II situation suggested that its application was still possible. Certain features of the voluntary service programs which emerged after World War II afforded examples for adapting an ancient method to contemporary situations. In the early 1960s Yoder participated in setting up the Overseas Missions Associate program of the Mennonite Board of Missions to encourage qualified people to accept employment as teachers, doctors, nurses, agriculturalists, and other professions in developing countries while also participating fully in the life and witness of local churches.

This vision caught the imagination of many people. A sizable number of Overseas Missions Associates have served since 1961, including some who have committed themselves to long-term service on this basis. Recently Larry Eisenbeis, completing ten years of work in Northeast Brazil, summarized that experience and what they have learned about "migration evangelism" as a method. To be fair both to Eisenbeis and the method, one needs to take into account similar experiences in other parts of the world as well as the notable contribution the Eisenbeis family has made to the local churches in Brazil. Nevertheless, the problems he cites are real and we must examine them carefully.

> This is written as a reflection on self-support as a missionary strategy. In the ten years of our work under self-support, I have repeatedly faced five major problems. Now, almost a year since we made the decision to leave, these problems have crystallized in my thinking, assuming an importance that prompts me to share them with people in administrative positions. I speak from personal experience, and from observation of other MBM workers in a variety of types of work: industry, farming, mechanics, home construction, contracting.
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> Self-support agriculture missions have long held a special appeal for me. As a 16-year-old I was challenged by missionaries on furlough from both Columbia and Africa to dedicate my life toward this work. It was this goal which prompted me to go to PAX, to volunteer for an ag assignment even though it meant extending my term of service, finishing college in a land grant college with an ag major, etc.
>
> In Brazil there is universal misunderstanding of our motive for being here. I imagine this holds true for most any "undeveloped" country where, from our Western point of view, it makes sense to engage in self-support missions. Nationals believe the foreigner is in the country to exploit it. The only other possible motive for coming here is to flee a difficult situation. Since nobody thinks North Americans are fleeing unfavorable conditions, we must be here to get rich. This idea is reinforced because the workers are active in business or farming ventures. Financial dealings are made to make a profit. Often there is an employer-employee relationship. In the minds of simple people, those who have money to employ others are "rich" and, of course, attempting to get richer. It matters little what the realities are—the stereotype prevails.
>
> Even missionaries on full support engaged in church planting work are suspect. Currently the stir in Brazil over foreign missionary work among the Indians is partially fueled by alleged prospecting for mineral wealth.
>
> The second great problem for anyone in self-support is lack of time available for mission work. Invariably it is more difficult and takes more time to try to make ends meet abroad than back in the USA. If it is difficult to schedule sufficient time in the States for church work, the problem multiplies in the foreign setting. It is general policy on grounds of strategy to avoid the customary leadership roles. That is fine, because there wouldn't be time for them. We like to pride ourselves in being an example, but often our example is confusing, or leaves people with the wrong impression. For instance, no self-support worker gets to all the meetings. This gives a lot of people an easy excuse: "Sr. Lari doesn't go to Wednesday night prayer meetings. I guess I can skip too." There are many other ways in which we

are serving as examples—poor examples—while our attention is absorbed in being a good example in some specific area we deem important.

The third problem which is completely out of our power to alter is the nature of the *patrao* system in Latin America. A peon-to-*patrao* relationship makes it impossible to know if conversions are real or only for the sake of obtaining a job.

A fourth problem lies in the ambiguity of our relationship to the mission board and the national church. The mission board sends the worker. How can the national church invite someone for a nebulous assignment of the self-support worker's choice, based at least 50 percent on earning possibilities in a given city, with consideration also for spiritual needs?

The fifth problem is the failure of "self-support" to be self-supporting, to provide sufficient funds. Without exception, self-support people depend on gifts, stateside regular income, or have begun with a bankroll of savings which is put to work until it disappears.

The idea of self-support missions is tantalizing, as evidenced by the number of people who have come into the mission program down this road. I cannot truthfully say that I wish I had not spent the past ten years here doing what I have been doing, because there were compensations for me and my family. But as mission stategy the self-support program as I have seen and experienced it in Brazil is not worth the cost.

(Overseas Missions Report 1977,
Mennonite Board of Missions, 28-29)

Summary

We cannot undertake the full-scale evaluation of this method which is called for. These concluding comments may serve as clues to the lines such an investigation might follow. The political climate today is less congenial to migration than it was in 1960. The job market has changed appreciably during the past two decades. Third World countries have an increasing number of their own trained people and unemployment is a persistent problem for them.

Many people have understood short-term programs for sending nonprofessional missionaries abroad as an application of the *As You Go* thesis. The thesis combined a nonprofessional approach to mission with lifetime commitment. The second half of the vision has been largely overlooked.

Although Yoder noted this possibility in the pamphlet, few people have seriously considered applying the thesis domestically. North America provides almost unlimited scope for its application. A few groups have worked at it on their own. Some people with experience in the Teachers Abroad Program, Voluntary Service, or similar programs have, upon leaving those assignments, banded together in communities in North America. The missionary potential of "migration evangelism" in urban and rural areas has not begun to be fully tapped. It remains a tantalizing idea.

— Wilbert R. Shenk

*See William J. Danker, *Profit for the Lord* (Eerdmans, 1971) for a study of the Moravian and Basel Mission experiences.

**Herald Press, 1961 (out of print).

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Contents

Towards a Theology of Communication, Arthur G. McPhee
Effective Evangelism: An Opportunity in Communication?, J. Allen Brubaker
Can Western Women Adapt to Japanese Culture?, Sue Richard
Africa and Christian Identity, A. F. Walls
Mission-Focus Index

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF COMMUNICATION

Arthur G. McPhee

David Augsburger said, "Christ's communication of Himself is the pattern for our communicating Christ," and he was right. When we look at Christ's communication, four things become immediately apparent. First of all, it was personal, as is illustrated by the incarnation. Second, it was understandable, which is illustrated by Jesus' use of parables. Furthermore, Jesus' communication was always life situational. And finally, it was motivational.

We need to begin by recognizing that because of the fall, communication with God has broken down. From man's point of view, there is an unbridgeable gap in communication between himself and his maker. Unregenerate man is out of touch with God. To be sure, his environment may give him a sense of God's presence and reality, and the poignant promptings and convicting work of the Holy Spirit may give further evidence of it. However, the open channels of communication that were apparently there at the beginning, according to the Book of Genesis, have been impaired substantially, as the result of sin, man's access to God has been cut off. The communion, the fellowship that was there in the beginning, has disintegrated and disappeared.

However, this took place not only on the vertical level, but on the horizontal level as well. The biblical account of Babel is illustrative of what we know to be true. Not only has communication broken down between man and God, but it has also broken down between man and his fellowman. Probably this goes all the way back to the garden and man's distorted awareness of his naked self. Psychologically man changed, and he began to feel vulnerable. The inevitable result of that was a breakdown in communication with his fellowman. This comes home with powerful clarity in the mortal quarrel between Cain and Abel.

The possibility of a change came when God stepped into history in the person of Jesus Christ. The incarnation or Christ event, by which I mean the historical coming of Christ to earth, of which the crucifixion and resurrection are the centerpiece, was the effective means by which the reconciliation of man to God took place. Note that it was not God who needed to be reconciled to man, nor man and God who needed to be reconciled to each other; it was man who needed to be reconciled to God. This is always the New Testament use of the word "reconciliation."

Christ's ministry in Galilee, I think, is a model for our ministry today. He communicated in earthy, intelligible ways. He was not primarily theological in His presentation of the good news of the kingdom, and neither should we be. In other words, it seems to me that theological abstractions are of doubtful value in proclaiming the joyous tidings of God's reign. The problem Christ had with the authorities was not that they didn't understand Him, but that they understood Him too well. There's a sense in which much of what He said was missed because it was new and unfamiliar. But that was the result of men's blindness, not Christ's methods. However, I think the strong reactions against His ministry are primarily indicative of the fact that the people understood much more than we are sometimes willing to admit. His parables and insights were crystal clear, but they were not acceptable to most of the people of His time, especially the religious leadership. But it was not the limitations of their reasoning powers that got in the way; it was the arrogance

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of reason. Man's revolt against God had derailed reason insofar as its direction is concerned, not its structures.

Through Jesus the Holy Spirit spoke with perfect clarity. Jesus' baptism by John and subsequent submission to the Spirit and the Spirit's complete freedom to work through Him. If men, therefore, because of sin could resist Jesus and His Word, they can certainly resist ours. It would seem, in fact, the probability of our communicating half as well as Jesus is akin to the possibility of splitting an atom with a knife. That is why it is so tragic that in many modern universities, chairs of theology are not necessarily held by professing Christians. But the tragedy is in the local church as well. There are too many unbelievers today for whom God is no more than an idea, but who insist that they believe enough to be called Christians. There are some who deny even the fundamental teachings of Christianity and whose sole interest in being a member of the church is some selfish reason: for example, so they can talk about ethics that are based not in theology, but in humanism. But is even the message of true believers who do not allow the Holy Spirit to use them as **His** channel of communication and who seek on their own to communicate the gospel by the crude inexact medium of words without power, going to be any clearer? Will the divine mystery be any plainer on their lips? If sin is so powerful that minds can remain closed even to Jesus, if even the Holy Spirit can be resisted, then how can we possibly expect our words to be effective unless it is the Spirit who speaks to them through us? God can only be known through a divine-human encounter, the kind of encounter that took place when Jesus personally confronted persons. That kind of encounter can take place today as well, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, although our communication like Jesus' must be personal, understandable, life-situational, and motivational, the most important and basic factor of all is the necessity of Jesus communicating Himself through us by the indwelling Spirit's power.

With that in mind, what should be our message to an alienated world? Richard Halverson says that "rift" is probably the best word to use in characterizing our society. What would the Spirit have us say to such a word? How do we carry out the ministry of reconciliation to which the gospel commits us?

I think in the first place, we begin to do that by faithfully proclaiming the way of reconciliation. I'll tell you why I think that. I think that you need to begin with the love of God in Christ instead of with man's depravity, because we don't really get hold of the depth of our sin until we get hold of something of the greatness of God's love.

Quite often you hear it the other way around. For example, many of the formulas for telling non-Christians about the gospel begin with man's sin and then go on to talk about the love of Christ. But I think you need to talk about the love of Christ first. When you stand on Your New Testament balcony and watch the Christ on the dusty street below—defying traditions, meeting people where they are and taking them where they cannot go, reaching out untiringly with the touch of compassion, seeking constant guidance from someone beyond the galaxies, with whom He seems to be in perfect tune . . . when you see Jesus, the model of what God intended you to be, the perfect fulfillment of the cosmic hope and design, humanity at its best . . . when you see Jesus, God in human flesh, His face set to Jerusalem, the unspeakable destiny of our nail-torn God, God crucified for the likes of you and me . . . suddenly it comes home! Suddenly it hits you that your problem goes much deeper than you ever dreamed. It is not a mere matter of some minor blemishes that can be covered up by the cosmetic of some slight behavioral adjustments—if only it were that simple! Rather, your problem is a spirit of rebellion so deep, so fundamental, you know the rottenness goes to the core. You had thought that sanctification was your need. Now you know that had God Himself not broken down the wall of hostility, nothing could save you.

That is why we need to begin by shining the spotlight on Christ Himself. For it is in the brilliance of the light of God crucified in Christ—that unfathomable love—that the darkness of our predicament finally comes to light. Only then do we realize that sin is more than what we've done, but also what we've missed—a spirit undeformed and whole!

Of course, proclaiming the way of reconciliation means more than telling the story of Christ and His crucifixion and resurrection. It involves describing the appropriate response as well. It involves explaining how one appropriates the forgiveness that's available as the result of Christ's sacrificial death.

So the ministry of reconciliation depends first of all upon faithfully proclaiming the way of reconciliation. However, it also depends upon forcefully asserting the need for reconciliation. That is an essential part of communicating the gospel too.

The reason why this is the second ingredient and not the first is that the reality of our bankruptcy does not really come home until we have before us the exhibition of God's great love in Christ. However, it does need to be clearly stated.

If God needed to reconcile us to Himself, there must have been some sort of rift that needed to be overcome, and of course there was. The description of that often goes against the grain in our society. Many people regard themselves as basically good. But the Christian view is just the opposite. The Christian view is that of David who, after Nathan had confronted him with his sin with Bathsheba, wrote: "I have been evil from the time I was born; from the day of my birth I have been sinful" (Ps. 51:5, GNB). Christians hold to the total depravity of man, which means not merely we are born into a world where we are subjected to sinful influences, but we are born as sinners, with an inward tendency towards sinning. It does not mean that there is no goodness in us, but it does mean that all our goodness is perverted and that our reasoning and discernment are distorted.

Listen to how Paul describes us in our pre-Christian state in Ephesians 2, for example: "As for you, you are dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler

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Litho in USA

of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath'' (vv. 1-3).

That is why, even though news about important peace agreements is good news and welcome news, it is no cause for wild rejoicing among us. It cannot last and it will not last. Apart from the grace of God, man's propensity to sin always leads him right back to fighting and quarreling.

That is why speaking out on issues of peace always takes second place to the proclamation of the good news. It is legitimate to speak out on such issues, because by doing so it is possible to be a restraining force. In fact, it is necessary to speak out on such issues, but is we make speaking about such things our primary message rather than a derivative message, and it it is always in the foreground while the gospel is always in the background, then while we may have some momentary but discernable impact upon a current issue or policy, because the gospel message has taken second place, we have essentially denied it and the world has not heard the message it really needs to hear. The insistency and urgency with which we have delivered the lesser plea serves to drown out the more urgent declaration that the world needs to be reconciled to God. That is not, however, to say that the lesser plea is to be neglected. The two always go together. But the plea for social reform makes no sense whatever unless it comes alongside the plea to repent and turn to God.

To expect Christian conduct from people who are not Christians is impossible. First they need to be regenerated. The New Testament makes it incontrovertibly clear that they must be given a new nature before they can even fully comprehend the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount, let alone put it into consistent practice. That is why speaking to issues is always secondary and alongside the essential word that man needs to hear, that is the need to be reconciled to God. The Christian message is not primarily ''abandon the draft and turn to peace''; The Christian message is primarily ''abandon sin and turn to God.'' Then and only then is the call to peace realistic.

Now, in the third place, let me comment on the manner in which we bring the message of reconciliation. We are out to make peace, the only real peace that is available in this world—the peace that passes understanding and misunderstanding—the peace that God makes. How do we carry out this ministry? By faithfully declaring the way of reconciliation, by forcefully asserting the need for reconciliation, and finally be fearlessly modeling the life of reconciliation.

This is where true biblical pacifism makes its entrance. Pacifism finds its theological rootage in Christian witness. The true warrant for biblical pacifism is the command to be peacemakers, to be reconcilers, to go into all the world with the good news of God's love. Witness is the central task of the Christian. Once we have become disciples of Jesus, that task takes priority over any other task. When Jesus said, ''You shall be my witnesses,'' He willed our entire lives (not just our verbal testimonies) to be a witness to God's love. That obviously demands the necessity of a disarmed life. Because God is our protector, because the servants in His kingdom do not fight, as Jesus told Pilate, because we witness to love, not hatred, peace must be of necessity our way of life.

The rationale for peace is not then: Is there room for a Christian to bear arms? Rather, as has often been pointed out, it is: Can a Christian who bears arms be an authentic witness? Is it ever possible to participate in warfare and consistently proclaim the gospel of God's love?

The answer to that, of course, is a resounding no! If my whole life is to be a witness to the love of God, then how can I possibly be a soldier or be involved in any other activity which is a denial of that love?

Again and again the New Testament speaks of peace as the great gift that Christ brought to us through the cross. The whole point of the communication of the gospel is that peace with God is possible. Reconciliation to God means that our relationship to Him has changed from enmity to friendship, from alienation to peace. That reconciliation comes about in only one way. It is the result of Christ's death. As Paul put it in Romans 5:10, ''When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son.'' Another time he puts it this way: ''For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.'' In other words, our rebellion was melted away in the crucible of Christ's sacrifice. And the necessary response to that is a life of peacemaking (not merely nonviolence; nonviolence is passive, but peacemaking is also active). The necessary result is the ministry of reconciliation, the fearless modeling of a life committed to peace and love.

Thus the communication of the gospel is never a threat, but a plea to look to the cross and to witness how great the love of God is (especially in view of man's total corruption). It is a plea to be reconciled to God, as we are reconciled. It is the living of reconciled lives ourselves, as an example of what we are talking about.

The man who is truly reconciled to God must be reconciled with his fellowman as well because there is no ground remaining on which to build walls; there is nothing left that needs protecting. All basis for pride, separation, and segregation is shattered. Peace with God must mean peace with our fellowmen. The two go together. That is why God says that unless we are willing to forgive others, we cannot expect Him to forgive us. The terms of reconciliation to God require reconciliation to our neighbor as well. There is no way for us to separate them. So being reconciled to God commits us to a life as well as to a message.

Thus the gospel must not only be true, but true for me if I am to communicate it effectively. It does not exist in a vacuum; it is incarnate in a person. That is how Christian history began, and that is how it abides—by Christ's coming into a life, claiming it, changing it, and personally working through it. That, to me, is how we begin to think about a theology of communication.

Effective Evangelism: An Opportunity in Communication?

J. Allen Brubaker

"How I changed over night."

"I'm too young to be old."

"If Clairol can't put color in your life, nobody can."

These catchy headlines, accompanied by eye-stopping graphics, appeared in a seven-million-dollar print and TV ad campaign Clairol used to launch a totally new hair product (*Ad Age,* August 1, 1977, p. 1). That's a lot of money spent to sell a product that merely changes the color of one's hair. Similarly, Swift and Company spent 12 million dollars in advertising to tell us that their peanut butter is now a little creamier (*Ad Age,* August 15, 1977, p. 1). This advertising is intended, not only to make us aware of these products and what they can do for us, but to convince us that we need them.

Companies that spend such large sums for advertising obviously believe it plays an important role in selling their product. They no doubt could produce statistics to show that their advertising dollars increase sales enough to more than recover the cost of the ads from the increased profits. Perhaps more phenomenal is the technique these companies use to communicate their message to us. Through short eye- and ear-catching broadcast and print messages, they grab our attention just long enough and with enough emotional appeal and memorability to rivet their messages in our minds. Furthermore, they speak to us while they have our attention about needs we feel (hunger, desire for beauty, etc.) and in language we easily understand.

A lesson for the church. Commercial advertisers have quickly learned that the public media, particularly television and radio, are some of the most forceful instruments to communicate to men and women in our generation. This is especially true if we want to reach large target audiences in the shortest possible time. We religious types are quick to attack many of the materialistic, hedonistic emphases of the commercial advertiser, but perhaps in the process we have abandoned a divine opportunity to share the good news of the gospel. In effect, we may have condemned a very effective method because of a bad teacher.

The church can very effectively use the public media—television, radio, newspapers, magazines—to share its message. One way is to use the advertising model, as compared to the program (e.g. preaching/teaching) model. The advertising model may suggest to you that the church takes biblical truth and distorts it to fit the changing whims of the marketplace. However, the real issue is not the truth, but how truth is communicated. That is to say that the church must communicate unchanging biblical truth in terms that people in the marketplace can understand. We adapt the method to maximize the strength of a given medium. Church history tells us that the church is most effective in ministering to people when it adapts its methods to fit the environment in which it exists.

Understanding the approach. The public media today—especially television and radio—are primarily entertainment media. Television is essentially a visual medium, well oriented to the experiential, either in real life or in simulated lifelike situations. Radio is an oral medium well adapted to the use of music and sound effects. Both media are very effective in providing entertainment through sports, music, dramas, novellas, and, of course, news, which takes on the character of entertainment. Educational programs are seldom popular on radio or television, with the exception of news. And religious programs that gain national attention take on the character of entertainment.

Richard K. Manoff, speaking to the Ninth International Congress on Nutrition in Mexico, said: **Programs are one-time performances, usually overloaded with too many ideas and too much information. As a result, they deliver a broad impression of the subject, leaving the audience with only a superficial and unfocused remembrance of some of the ideas. Whatever impact they have fades over time.**

This isn't to say that programs don't have their place. It does describe a weakness of the program format. And one weakness of this format for religious purposes is the tune-out factor. Manoff comments further that programs often have "neither the budget nor the talent to infuse elements of audience appeal. Moreover, they tend to appeal to motivated audiences who need the instruction least." We can interpret his comment by saying that religious programs tend to speak to religiously committed persons. Thus, if you're trying to reach the non-Christian through a religious program, you're likely reaching the wrong audience, especially if your program appears in the back-to-back religious time block on Sunday morning. And if you go into the nonreligious time slots with the wrong approach or format, you may simply drive people away.

The advertising technique overcomes the weakness of the program model through its brevity and its insertion into existing entertainment shows. It is, therefore, able to reach large desired audiences as they are viewing/listening to their favorite shows. Television and radio ads are short—usually up to one minute—but they achieve maximum memorability, are emotionally appealing (or repulsive!), and are usually capable of repetition many times in a day, week, or month. While they demand neither interest nor motivation, they often waken both in us, either in a negative or a positive way. Nevertheless, we usually tolerate their intrusion because of our interest in the entertainment to follow. When the ads are well done, they appeal to areas of felt need in our lives.

Implications for congregational outreach. Outreach suggests that we would like to share the good news of the gospel with persons who are not now a part of our

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congregation. Because these persons are presently disinterested in religion, they likely will **not** tune in to religious radio and TV programs released Sunday morning. To reach the non-Christian viewer/listener means we must go where he/she is already viewing or listening, and do so in a manner that will **not** make him/her switch channels (e.g. drive them away). This is where the advertising model can be effectively employed.

In using this method, the truly Christian communicator will carefully design his message to fit the character of the media and to communicate the message so that it is consistent with the content of the message itself. For example, to attempt to preach a one-minute sermon doesn't maximize the visual/experiential character of television nor the character of the brief, memorable, emotionally appealing ad. A Sunday morning religious program format ministers largely to Christian people. No doubt a few people on the fringes of religion will tune in, at least for a while. Some religious groups use a program format on TV during the week. Usually these take on the nature of an entertainment show, at least to the extent that they appeal to large unchurched audiences. The degree to which they drive away the unchurched illustrates their weakness.

One of the chief obstacles in producing religious programs with strong appeal to the unchurched is their high cost. On the other hand, spot announcements are relatively inexpensive to produce and can reach large audiences with emotional appeal and memorability. Furthermore, if properly done, stations will release them on free time. In the United States, stations are licensed with the obligation to devote a significant portion of their air time to serve the interests of persons in their communities. Licenses are renewed on the basis of whether or not the station has operated in the public interest. One way stations operate in the public interest is to broadcast messages that are of vital concern to persons in their communities.

Radio and TV spot announcements, if properly produced, are acceptable to stations to use on public-service time, known in the industry as sustaining time. However, such spot messages must, from the station's standpoint, contain high technical quality and deal responsibly with the needs of viewers and listeners in their communities. Quite obviously, stations receive much more material than they can use on public-service time because many organizations are trying to obtain free time. Thus, spot announcements are **not** an invitation to mediocrity, but a challenge to excellence.

The effectiveness of the advertising model. The real strength of a spot announcement is to raise awareness of a product or service, to build an understanding of it, and to create interest for it. Usually such an announcement will not cause the viewer or listener to immediately drive, walk, write, or call about the product or service. But if the person ever has a need for such a product or service or should ever face a need addressed in the announcement, he/she may remember your message.

Spot announcements help the local congregation in a number of ways. First, they help the viewer or listener to be aware of a specific Christian truth and how it relates to his or her life. A good way to illustrate this is with a slice-of-life drama or a true-to-life testimonial. Spots that speak with integrity to a particular need of the viewer or listener stand a good chance of creating interest in learning more about the Christian faith. They, therefore, can serve as a nudge toward belief and action. The denominational name on the tag makes the person aware of a particular belief or way of life of the group. If the spot announcement is sponsored by your congregation, you can add the congregation or pastor's name, address, and phone number. This helps to create an identity for the sponsor and tells the person where he or she can relate to persons identified in the announcement.

Spot announcements on radio or television can be one important step in the communications process to invite men and women into the community of faith. We cannot expect such spots to tell non-Christians everything there is to know about the Christian faith and to bring them to commitment in one quick easy process. Spots can effectively help them to grasp one specific Christian truth and how this relates to one aspect of life. And what can be more appealing than to discover a solution to one specific need?

The information model. A second media approach, the news model, can be even more effective than the advertising model. People watch, listen, and read to be informed, as well as entertained. And the best religious news is the church truly being the church.

Albert H. van den Heuvel, a well-known communicator in Western Europe, wrote in the *WACC Journal* (April 1977, p. 4): **If Churches are really willing to inform and not to promise or threaten, the media will offer an unalienable instrument for evangelism. But are Churches willing to discipline themselves in that way? If so, they should not use public media to preach about the liberating promises of God, but inform people about men [and women] and situations where this liberation can be seen and verified. They should not threaten people with Sermons of perdition but show how a godless life keeps people enslaved and meaningless. They should not bombard people with sermons about sin, but exemplify in which sins the reader, the viewer and his community are indulging.**

Later in the article he continues: **The media are the God-given instruments by which the gospel can become good news again. It requires the discipline of sorting out Christian life and theology in such a way that communicable events and developments are ruthlessly checked as to their information value.** The kind of news he's talking about calls for honesty and concreteness. This means not trying to look better than we are or hiding mistakes. It means being willing to show that we live on promises and forgiveness rather than on success; that we give praise to God and shoulder responsibility for our mistakes; that we love sinners more than the righteous; that we call for repentance when all seems well and are able to endure suffering joyfully.

This kind of honesty is hard to come by. The temptation is to try to portray ourselves as good citizens who uphold the morals of our society and judge all who are wrong.

Jesus showed mercy to down-and-out persons, the discriminated minorities, and sided with the powerless. And if we take the opposite stance, we betray our own nature and deceive the public. On the other hand, when God's people live honestly and truly relate to the deep needs of people around them, they will be the news of the day. Consequently, the media will want to report that kind of news, and evangelization will occur. That is, people will sit up, take notice, and want to be a part of that kind of caring community, even though they decide not to join our congregation.

Earlier in his article van den Heuvel notes that evangelization is God searching for people. We are merely His messengers bringing the good news. And we bring the good news best when we demonstrate that the captives are indeed being set free, the blind are seeing, the poor and the oppressed are being fed, clothed, housed, and made whole. That kind of news inspires belief and action.

Churches can, no doubt, do a better job of living honestly and of allowing the news media to report what they're about—both the successes and the failures. We can do more to present slice-of-life spots and short dramas that show faith in action in a given situation. The media are important means of communication today. If God's acts in time, fleshed out by His people, are not a part of the media mix, can we fault the world for writing us off?

An editorial in the May 21, 1977 issue of *America* suggested: **The churches must maintain publicly and insistently the image of man presented in the Sermon on the Mount, a message unit designed in prayer and solitude, but proclaimed with greatest impact in the marketplace itself.** What more could your congregation do to help that to happen?

Resources

Clairol ad, *Redbook,* September, 1977, inside cover and p. 1.

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CAN WESTERN WOMEN ADAPT TO JAPANESE CULTURE?

Sue Richard

A Japanese friend once said to Lafcadio Hearn: "When you find, in four or five years more, that you cannot understand the Japanese at all, then you will begin to know something about them" (Hearn 1928:5). After many more years in Japan, Hearn began his *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation* by admitting, "I cannot understand the Japanese at all" (1928:6).

Twelve years qualifies me to make the same confession. Oriental culture and occidental culture are vastly different. Without a measure of understanding and appreciation for Japanese culture, a Westerner cannot make Japan his/her home.

In this article I will examine the cultural conflicts that occur when West encounters East, and more specifically when a Western missionary woman attempts to adjust to Japanese culture. The conflicts loom large if one tries to transplant values and assumptions wholesale into another culture. With some give and take, however, I believe a satisfactory measure of acculturation is possible. I want to deal with my "takings," new insights and appreciations of Japanese culture, and conclude with possible areas for "giving," areas in which I feel a Western Christian can legitimately exert influence for cultural change.

Few people go to another country equipped anthropologically to deal with all the cultural differences they will encounter. Most take the dive and then learn to swim. Cultural maladjustment is a sensitive issue. People are reluctant to talk about why they failed to adjust or how their failure could have been avoided. I recall one conversation with an American woman just before she and her husband left Japan after eight years of missionary service. She saw her husband's unhappiness as the root of the problem: too many guests, too little privacy, his need for new self-identity. But friends and coworkers said she was a loner, could not find creative outlets in Japanese society, and seemed generally dissatisfied.

Edward Hall articulates the dynamics at work when one attempts to take the plunge into another culture: **Creative use of intercultural relations exposes some very deep, highly personalized, and sensitive areas of the psyche. . . . In studying oneself by the cross-cultural technique one starts with the notion that what is known least well and is therefore in the poorest position to be studied is what is closest to oneself; . . . these are the unconscious patterns that control one's life** (1976:40).

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Westerners viewing the little oriental archipelago through travelogues and history books tend to picture the Japan of tea gardens and pagodas; they suppose its people are charming and artistic. Many first encounters produce wonder and delight in the newcomer. Modesty and gracefulness are cultivated social arts. One immediately admires the serene, ritualistic movements of Japanese women in formal settings. Strict convention governs degrees of bows and ranks of seating, and inner compliance to a hierarchy of social relations had made it relatively easy for Japanese to defer to one another. To know one's place is to be secure as well as polite.

Emotions are strictly guarded. Strength of character means avoiding emotional outburst and concealing one's true feelings with the ever present stoic smile of tranquility. Feminine virtues are ardently taught and exquisitely exhibited. But the glamor of oriental life soon peels away when one's Western presuppositions come into conflict with Japanese social norms. Unless one can rise above ethnocentricity and can identify elements that contribute to cultural dissonance, unresolved internal tensions insidiously build up.

The Roman Catholic anthropologist, Louis Luzbetak, writes: **To adjust one's general behavior and specialized skill to local ways will call for a recognition, appreciation and even actual adoption of numberless shocking attitudes and practices. Not the sacrifice of the luxuries of an American home or the consolations of relatives and friends but the sacrifice of one's own ways and values will be the missionary's greatest sacrifice; in fact it may even become a slow martyrdom** (1963:15).

What I had viewed as elegant and beautiful in Japanese people gradually became a source of irritation. Like other "settled in" expatriates, I secretly wondered why women in Japan needed to be bound by such incommodious social decorum. I entertained many questions: "Isn't it possible to laugh unabashedly without covering one's face?" "Why must one always avoid direct confrontation in speech?" Before my own assumptive world was threatened by conflicting values, I felt Japanese social behavior was a beautiful buttress of societal stability and harmonious interactions. Gradually conflicts mounted and guilt set in. My Western training taught me an assertive etiquette and grace that demonstrate self-worth and pride. "Stand up straight." "Keep your shoes on." "Speak out and air your opinions." These attitudes were thoroughly ingrained and did not easily succumb to opposing values of social deference.

Japan is called a country of paradoxes. World traveler Edward Hall has observed: "I can think of few countries Americans are likely to visit or work in . . . where it is more difficult to control one's input and where life is more filled with surprises than Japan" (1976:49).

"Freedom, spontaneity, optimism, activity, individualism, and self-assertion" characterize the West, whereas the East is characterized by "stoicism, pessimism, introspection, conventionality, patience, and reticence" (Gulick 1963:51). Without an understanding of the culture that esteems such qualities, conflicts arise within the person who tries to harmonize the antonymous nature of two cultures.

Cultural conflicts reach beyond the cultural environment into the physical environment. Spatial confinement may gnaw at inner contentment. Women vent their annoyance in a variety of ways: "I miss my garden and lawn." "A back yard with a little green grass would be so nice." "There is no room in our flat for my washer/dryer/refrigerator/range." Restrictions extend to the outside world as well. Standing in tight lines, shopping in crowded stores, and commuting in congested trains and buses pose an infraction of spatial rights few outsiders tolerate happily.

However, a flexible person can learn techniques from people accustomed to living in crowded conditions. The Japanese know how to exploit space; they can do the maximum in minimal space. The train station "pusher," for example, makes room for extra commuters morning and evening. Westerners bristle at being pushed and crushed. The Japanese have learned to ignore it. They reserve special respect for what is directly related to them. Social obligations are inoperative outside one's web of relationship. In domains where spatial rights cease to exist, tension is greatly reduced. "Not seeing is another way of seeing. If one can learn to ignore, then the limits of reality seem to disappear" (Condon 1974:129).

Rooms in Japan are measured in mats—a mat is three by six feet. College boarding students must confine their living space to 4½-mat rooms. An old saying expresses the philosophy at work: "Sleeping you need one mat; standing you need only a half."

Creating illusions of space is another way of making close living tolerable. Japanese speak of practical illusions; cloth curtains give one an illusion of privacy, and paper doors that divide rooms can seem thicker than doors made of wood. Opening doors and windows expands the dimensions of a room and brings the natural world nearer. Cold weather necessitates other ways of coping.

Room decor is also crucial to comfort. Decorations should be few and simple; large objects, however beautiful, are hard to appreciate. Japanese etiquette suggests that one central motif, a piece of pottery or a flower arrangement, is enough to make a room pleasant and restful. "A well designed space may yield a far greater sense of spaciousness than one would guess from looking only at the dimensions" (Condon 1974:129). The woman who is willing to decorate her home Japanese-style, making do with apartment-sized and fold-up items, can create illusions of space and clear rooms of clutter. Divesting oneself of American-type abundance is a first step to appreciating simple beauty Japanese-fashion.

Many foreigners have a strong negative reaction to the discovery that husband and wife in Japan function in completely separate worlds. The Western wife in Japan meets a rude shock when she finds that her name seldom appears on formal invitations, and she is rarely invited to her husband's social engagements. My reactions ranged from shock to anger to questioning. This in turn led to examining Japanese women's social position. Centuries of subjugation and conformity have produced wives relatively content with their status. Vogel, in *Japanese Middle Class,* confirmed my observations: **The Japanese women do not complain of lack of companionship as American women**

might if the husband's business world were entirely removed from them. . . . Quite the contrary, . . . the Japanese wife prefers her husband not to encroach upon her territory, for this limits her autonomy, and she and her children need to be more reserved in the husband-father's presence (1965:194-95). The Westerner can hardly refrain from challenging this pattern of virtuous deference.

Of all the intercultural conflicts Western women in Japan face, the greatest relate to language. The inscrutability of Japanese to the Western mind often stands in the way of facility in communication, yet language complexity may not be the heart of the problem. The meaning of words spoken by the native speaker may be perfectly clear, yet the nonverbal communication mystifies the unaccustomed foreigner. Japanese scholars refer to their language as a "terminal language" (Kunihiro 1976:273). Oriental tongues skip process to go to conclusion, whereas our Western languages emphasize logical process, answering what, why, how questions. Westerners are not accustomed to leaps in logic and find themselves wondering how the speaker came to his/her conclusions.

Western-style communication differs from Japanese speech in another respect. While dialogue characterizes our style of conversation, the Japanese consciously avoid confrontation and hence often engage in intermittent monologues to ensure relaxed, harmonious relations. Conversing in Japanese is like "taking a comfortably hot bath and thoroughly enjoying the warmth of another human being" (Kunihiro 1976:275). The dilemma the uninitiated person experiences may best be comprehended by observing it in reverse. "Even I, as a pure Japanese, have a strong sensation that I am another man when I give a speech in English. I feel like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, as if somehow I have put on a disguise." Kunihiro goes on to say: "Expressing myself in a foreign language is not merely a passive act, but an active, creative undertaking" (1976:275). Conversely, speaking Japanese requires a similar reasoning and fresh metaphors, native Japanese ears expect to hear a speaker choose appropriate forms and manipulate time-honored phrases in a smooth, emotionally warm manner.

Deprived of one's mother tongue, one must babble new, strange-sounding words. This produces particular frustration for the Westerner whose normal speech pattern tends toward impetuous, off-the-cuff responses. Automatic responses in one's own tongue speed along conversation and satisfy the need to comunicate.

Larson clarifies the mysterious element of the frustration many feel. "Language is man's most precious possession, the last thing that he gives up before death, almost like breath itself. . . . To take it away even for a time in a limited way is for many a devastating experience" (1977:77). Observe the missionary who is reunited with compatriots after months of work in newly-acquired Japanese. Chatter invariably ensues until each one's need for free expression is satisfied.

Knowing how to build satisfactory primary relationships in the second culture is an adjunct of language frustration that many women face but few discuss. Acceptance and security come with being part of an in-group and finding people with whom one can share deepest joys and struggles. The first years in a new culture are crucial. Love draws the missionary close to others, yet anxieties about communication may cause anxious withdrawal to avoid the risks of misunderstanding and embarrassment. Women, more than men, are vulnerable to this particular struggle. Japanese is a language governed by strict convention. Men are permitted the use of freer, rough, shortened forms of speech, but women must use special forms and soft, sustained, even-flowing diction. Femininity is enhanced or destroyed by one's speech. Proper speech reflects proper upbringing and to a large extend determines whether a woman will be accepted by the in-group.

The person hoping to establish satisfactory psychological identification needs to reach out in many directions. Scripture offers many insightful stories about identification for the sake of mission; the book of Ruth is a beautiful story of successful acculturation. The family cluster, a sheltered enclave, can be an important source of support. Although it may slow down the process of acculturation, the family still "serves to reduce the emotional disturbances that accompany cultural contact" (Spiro 1955:1247). Compatriots, sensitive to needs, can also provide understanding and support. The church, the body with which one seeks to identify ultimately, is much less rigid about social convention than other relationship groups. Church members accept the stranger more readily than do others. Many anxieties are assuaged when learning to know and being known happen in the context of spiritual brother- and sisterhood.

For those whose difficulties arise from the structural rather than the cultural aspects of language, ease comes only with constant exposure, fearlessness, and commitment to mastery. Any "surrendering of arms" cuts off the possibility of adaptation and long-term survival.

In light of all the potential conflicts in intercultural adjustment, what should the transitional person's attitude be? How can one minimize the identity crisis and hasten acculturation? Adopting the position of learner stands one in good stead. **The adaptation of the newcomer to the in-group which at first seemed to be strange and unfamliar to him is a continuous process of inquiry into the cultural patterns of the approached group. If this process of inquiry succeeds, then this pattern and its elements will become to the newcomer a matter of course, an unquestionable way of life, a shelter, and a protection. Then the stranger is no stranger anymore and his specific problems have been solved** (Schuetz 1960:109).

When inquiry grows out of a genuine desire to understand the new way of life, one gains much which will help in sharing the gospel of Christ. By studying oriental culture through the arts, the learner develops skills and gains entrance into the most natural setting for penetrating and mystery of Japanese thought and religious sentiment. "The Japanese consider every art to be a form of schooling which grants insight into life's beauty" (Herrigel 1958:xii). The Japanese regard beauty as the element of art which transcends rationality and utility thinking; art is pursued for the sake of spiritual enlightenment. One best understands the close affinities of Zen Buddhism and the

arts when learning flower arrangement or tea ceremony.

Interpersonal relationships, complicated as they are in Japan, provide a further learning opportunity for people willing to submerge themselves in the society's intricate social networks. Learning to interact in a socially acceptable way affords one a deeper understanding of the meaning of subordinating individual goals and interests to those of the group. Many advocate the "servanthood role" for missionary activity. This posture is not strange to Japanese people. Society has institutionalized secular principles of servanthood to ensure harmonious relationships. The situation is thus ready-made for the missionary to demonstrate the social consequences of a dynamic, obedient relationship to the living Lord. This relationship does not abdicate selfhood, nor does it passively submit to the normative pattern of static conformity in hierarchical relations.

Becoming a bicultural person requires learning and serving. The search for acceptable acculturative patterns will be most rewarding when missionary and church carry on the search together. Partnership needs to characterize the process. The missionary must shed cultural baggage for the sake of the gospel, but the church also must kindle missionary zeal and grapple with the implications of becoming a sending body. When Christ's mandate to go and preach becomes a bilateral concern, the church gains a new appreciation for the foreigner who is trying to break into an alien culture. Together church and missionary seek to create new cultural structures as the Holy Spirit leads. The fruit of their labor will be mutual enrichment as they integrate elements of both cultures to form the new society.

In contrast, nativism is a unilateral attempt at cultural adaptation, referred to as "going native," or "snuggling" (Cleveland 1960:28,29). Although noble in its aspirations, nativism often ends in disillusionment because the total burden of cultural absorption falls on the guest. Newcomers, wanting to avoid the pitfalls of becoming part of an isolated enclave, often overreact by rejecting their own traditions and cultural values for those of the host country. Perhaps apprehensiveness about being accepted or being successful tempts one to surrender one's own identity. Luzbetak suggests that the local people's attitude is important in telling the American missionary just how American or un-American he should be (1963:9). Accluturation is not a matter of passively relinquishing one's national identity; rather it is a creative act in which both parties share in finding a new identity under the lordship of Christ. This process enables members of both cultures to discover that the command to "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" requires mutuality.

To what extent then can the missionary serve as an agent of cultural change? Those who see the missionary as a destroyer of folk pleasures and spreader of gloom strongly advise against meddling with other people's religions or value systems. Bob Dunham, a guest in Japan, addressed missionaries with these words: **If you attempt a one-man campaign to "convert" the people to what you feel are more modern, logical western habits you only find yourself . . . losing the battle. You will find life a bit easier if you follow instead of trying to lead, for that is the secret of the Japanese way of life** (1967:16).

On the other hand, the foreigner's presence itself suggests change. The chief concern of the missionary becomes not whether society will change but how it will change. What are the dynamics of the process? What kind of an innovator will the missionary be? Only when the missionary casts off all vestiges of arrogance about Western culture and seeks to direct change in a way that undergirds and respects existing patterns will the attempt at change be legitimate. But the real transformers of culture need to be the local people, with the Holy Spirit's power and direction.

Given the above, I believe that in several areas missionaries can rightly initiate action for change in Japan's social structures. Japanese people are internationally minded despite their tendency to differentiate between the outside world and "our world." Banquet-hall banners and speeches proclaim "worldwide friendship" and "worldwide peace." As a member of the church, a worldwide, interracial organization, the missionary faces the unique challenge of broadening the concept of worldwide friendship and peace beyond secular pursuit of self-interest. Inside as well as outside the church, people need an international peace consciousness that transcends ethnicity and stresses service in a cooperative struggle against oppression. Japan's so-called "insular mentality" regards the outside world with a view to finding ways to inculcate new ideas for economic expansion. This needs to give way to viewing surrounding nations as neighbors with whom technological skills can be shared for socioeconomic improvement. The bearer of the Christian gospel of peace, though, views service in a much broader context: the mission of reconciliation for Japan is integral to all social action in Asia.

Kurihara Akira, writing about the international consciousness of his people, concluded with a challenge that both the Westerner and the church could profitably pick up. He says old thought patterns need to be transformed in order to create a genuine international sense. The first step is to establish a "base" in the heart of a milieu dominated by artificial relationships, to cultivate a "dual consciousness" which will enable Japanese to reject old values while building new ones (1972:301).

As Westerners, we have the responsibility to shatter the typical TV/movie image which Japanese have of Americans. The pleasure-loving rich, the youth with sex appeal, the jet-setters are the models many Japanese try to emulate. The reverse values—honesty, fidelity, service—are best fostered where a nucleus of believers can flesh them out. The missionary who cares about neighbors can begin to reverse the pernicious, thing-oriented trend to a people-oriented style of living. Japan has traditionally been an imitator. In light of that fact, Westerners who have historically been model exporters need to introduce sound models worthy of imitation. The missionary soon discovers that the task of redeeming worldly models is as great as that of creating new Christian ones.

Pornography is one imported social evil that needs immediate creative counter voices and counteraction. For Japanese people with insatiable curiosity about sex, the church should prepare literature that answers questions in light of its biblical, God-intended use. Christians struggle with issues of abortion, family planning, and divorce,

searching for principles to guide them in making crucial decisions. The missionary should encourage Japanese Christians to produce material appropriate to their culture to speak to these issues.

The rallying cry of many women in Japan today is "emancipation." Sumie Mishima in the *Broader Way* echoes the words I heard so often: "economic independence." She suggests that it is "the crucial step for any social freedom of a sound and fruitful nature" (1953:211). Advocates of women's liberation voice numerous claims of injustices and press for militant action through the organization, **Chupiren.** The plight of Japanese women calls for sympathetic understanding. However, an alternative to militant action needs to be set forth, based on the biblical principles of active love lest women completely alienate themselves from mutually satisfying social relationships. The Western woman is often asked to talk about women's roles because of her unique social position. As a Christian, the missionary has special resources for responding to the questions people ask her.

Western couples can also contribute to Japanese practices in entertaining guests. Family or couple entertaining is not practiced in Japan. Such entertaining helps to break down sexual discrimination and allows people to socialize outside closely knit circles. Entertaining also provides a plus element for the foreign wife; it helps to satisfy a normal socializing need and keeps her from being drawn exclusively into a foreign community.

Single people face discrimination in Japan. Traditionally they were not accorded full social status. The Westerner's heterogeneous social background can aid understanding and reduce discrimination. Small gestures of friendship and words of encouragement can build confidence and help society and church to see that single people are not "leftover blessings." We found that including single adults in our family fun from time to time filled an important social need for us and for them.

Can a Western woman adapt to Japanese society in light of all the cultural differences? Yes, but not without effort. Life in Japan is not pure adventure for the guest. The Westerner may always be regarded as an outsider in homogeneous cultures like Japan. Nida reminds the missionary that even partial identification is possible only if the person recognizes the inherent limitations of the process. Otherwise, he says, the person will spend time in fruitless questioning of others' motives and endless self-accusation (1960:168). Nida's statement does not close the door to satisfactory assimiliation, however. Cultural differences may seem like overwhelming obstacles, but because identification is an act in partnership with God, grace and strength are supplied to those who faithfully obey.

The ultimate goal of identification for Christian workers is that men and women may know and become the righteousness of God. Curiosity and eagerness for knowledge facilitate assimilation. Originality and prudence keep one a productive member of the adopted society in the dual role of priest and prophet, culture stabilizer and culture agitator.

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AFRICA AND CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

A. F. Walls

One of the more useful ways of grouping the ways in which men view the world is a division between primal world views, Indian world views, and Semitic world views; that is, those of most "tribal" peoples, those who live in small scale societies; the variety of views which have in common a cyclic view of the universe and causation, which find their expression in Hindu and Buddhist thought; and those linear, history-based world views characteristic of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is also possible to group the faiths of mankind in another way: primal religions, which are the traditional religions of small scale societies, each binding by nature on all members born into that society, but not regarded as binding anyone else; universal religions, which make claims on all mankind; and folk religions, which result from fusions of the other two; where a universal faith is treated **as though** it were a primal traditional one. In either case, the primal religions form a major group of mankind, far more significant than the popular books on comparative religion, with their casual chapter on "traditional religions" or "primitive religions," or (still worse) "animism," might suggest. I am going to use the word "primal" more often than "traditional," partly because **all** religions are traditional, and one therefore needs to keep qualifying the phrase ("Zulu traditional religion," "Qechua traditional religion," "African traditional religions"): partly because "Primal" usefully emphasizes two important facts about them: the **historical priority** of these world views to all the great religions, and in all parts of the world, and their **basic, elemental nature.** They show man's religious responses in their most basic form.

Christianity and the Primal Religions

For Christians there is a still greater reason for taking the primal religions seriously. Historically, they have always been the most fertile soil for the gospel. They underlie, therefore, the Christian faith of the vast majority of Christians of all ages and all nations. What have been the societies which have become Christians in the mass? The multitudinous peoples of the Mediterranean empire of Rome (who had primal religions, even though they had literary expression for them); the barbarian tribes of the North and West from whom most of us are descended; and in the last three centuries or so, tribal or post-tribal peoples in sub-Saharan Africa, the Southern Americas, the Pacific. Indeed, it is hard, in the two millennia of Christian history so far, to find **large** adhesions to the Christian faith **except** among primal peoples. The modern Christian churches of southern and eastern Asia are precious sections of the world church; yet even there, what a high proportion of Christians have come from primal backgrounds, or, in India, from those circles where the expression of Hinduism is much like that of a primal religion.

For Christians, then, in the providence of God, the primal religions have a peculiar importance. When we consider the present position of the Christian world, the importance of **some** primal religions is even more greatly enhanced.

Let us consider. There have been three real turning points in church history so far when the whole balance of the church, geographical and racial, has altered. One was within the first century, when Christians, having once been an all-Jewish community, became an overwhelmingly Gentile one. One came within what Europe still calls the Dark Ages, when the church lost its old heartlands, certainly in Europe (and I would guess in North America also) and again found a new base, this time in the Southern Continents, and especially in Latin America and Africa. The latter has every appearance of providing much of the greatest number of professing Christians in any continent by the end of the present century. The shape of the church, the theology that later church historians have to write about, is likely to be determined by what happens in Africa over the next few generations. And Africa's primal religions, the substratum of the religious life of the most substantial body of the world's Christians, are therefore of fundamental importance for the future of the church.

The Inescapable Christian Tension

It would be possible to write church history in terms of the interplay of two forces, each legitimate in itself, which are at work in any society which becomes affected by the gospel. One is that of making Christianity at home in the life of a people rooting the gospel in its culture, its language, its habits of thought—"indigenizing" it, in fact, making the church (in the words of the title of a well-known book about African independent churches) "a place to feel at home." The other is the conforming of a church's life to standards outside itself—standards which can cut across **anyone's** pattern, a process which reminds the Christian that he has no abiding city, no home on earth.

Both forces spring directly out of the gospel. The urge to make Christianity a place to feel at home, rooted in a people's culture, life and language, is of the heart of the gospel because it is a fundamental of the gospel that God takes us as we are, simply on grounds of what Christ has done. If He takes us as we are, He takes us in the state

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which all the conditions of our birth, history, and upbringing—our culture in fact—have placed us. He takes us not as isolated, detachable individuals, but as part of social complexes, with all our social relations on us. He takes us with a certain set of relationships with family, clan, tribe, nation. Inevitably—and the implications of this aren't always recognized—He takes us with our "disrelations" on us too—the sensitivities, hostilities, suspicions, prejudices, justified or not, which arise from our history and position. He doesn't wait to tidy up our ideas any more than He waits to tidy up our lives when He accepts us in Christ. It is for this reason, incidentally, that we should avoid that naive view of the gospel which suggests that all international problems, all social problems, will be solved simply by preaching the gospel: it is simply **not true;** that is not the way God in His mercy works. He takes us not out of the world but in the world, and that means as we are, as our culture and history have made us, and with all the consequent relations and disrelations. The Christian life, then, is one which will begin, flourish and abound in us "just as we are"—in our own culture and history. The fact that "if any man is in Christ he is a new creation" doesn't mean that he starts in a vacuum, or as a blank table. God has made his new creation in a particular time and place, it will be shaped by a particular time and place, and a man's Christian mind will be shaped by what was in it before he was a Christian. This is as true of churches as of people, and it means that there is not and has never been, and we cannot resonably expect there ever to be, a church which is not a culture church. All churches are culture churches, including our own.

This fact caused the first really major rumpus in Christian history. The first Christians were all Jews, and the mother church of all was Jerusalem. Jerusalem sent out the inspectors and the deputations to see whether new movements in Samaria or Antioch were really the work of God. They were the people with the largest experience of God, the deepest knowledge of Scriptures. Of course they rejoiced when they heard Paul talking about all the new converts in Asia Minor, about all those pagans seeing the light, turning to God. It was just as the prophets had spoken of the Gentiles taking hold of the skirts of one that was a Jew, saying "We will go with you for God is with you." They rejoiced in the conversions, but they made one fundamental assumption about them: that conversion meant that Gentile Christians would be as much like Jerusalem Christians as it was possible for such benighted heathens to become. And they would no doubt continue to follow Jerusalem's lead in all things; there were, after all, plenty of acculturated Gentiles. And when it didn't work out that way, there was trouble: we all know the story of Acts 15 and Galatians. Paul insists that there is **no** necessity for Gentile Christians to become like Jerusalem Christians. God has accepted them as they are. And he shouts at them—no circumcision, no food tabus, no ritual washings, nothing that would turn you into Jews or pseudo-Jews. You are not—you are Christians. Even those of you who are married to pagans—they are sanctified because of you. And to his Jewish brethren he shouts: No circumcision—only faith.

And much to the surprise, one imagines, of almost everyone at the Jerusalem Council, the future did not lie with Jerusalem Christians anyway. It lay with Corinthian and Galatian and Roman Christians, and fifty years after Paul, most Christians were like them, and not like Jerusalem Christians at all.

Christ took flesh and was made man in a particular time and place, family, nationality, tradition and customs and sanctified them, while still being for all men in every time and place. Wherever he is taken by the people of any day, time and place, he sanctifies that culture—he is living in it. And no other group of Christians has any right to impose in his name a set of assumptions about life determined by another time and place.

But to acknowledge this is not to forget that there is another, and equally important, force at work among us. Not only does God in His mercy take people as they are: He takes them to transform them into what He wants them to be.

This implies division, and the theme of division runs right through the Lord's words: he who came to bring not peace but a sword, who expected to set a son against father and brother against brother; who told his followers that a man's foes will be those of his own household. It runs through the words of His apostles, as they indicate that the Christian is not to be conformed to this world but transformed by the renewal of the mind. In other words, the Lord and His apostles—the one in Jewish society, the other in Hellenistic culture—**expected** the Lord's followers to be in a measure out of step with their societies: that there would be rubs and frictions and divisions, **whatever** that culture or society may be. The rubs arise, not from the adoption of a new culture, but from the transformation of the mind towards that of Christ.

One aspect of this is that the Christian is given a new set of relationships. He is still in the culture in which he was brought up: Christ has sanctified that culture by His presence in it. But he is also a member of a new people created by Christ, with a new set of family relationships, a new kith and kin of all families and nations and tongues, to whom he owes family loyalty and whom he must accept—as God has accepted him—with their group relations on them. Every Christian, that is, has dual nationality: he belongs to his human family based on kinship and nationality and to the faith family, which links him to people outside his own interest group and nationality—links him to those in opposing interest groups and nationalities who share his faith. His position between the two may become peculiarly difficult.

An Adoptive Past

Another aspect, and one less often noticed, is that he is given an adoptive past. He is linked to the people of God in all generations, who are his people, of the faith family. In particular, he is linked to the history of Israel, given several thousand years of someone else's history—for Israel, too, was the people of God.

Perhaps one can see this most clearly by thinking what it must have been like for the first Christian generation of the Gentiles. Paul talks about this in Romans 9-11. Notice there Paul's loyalty and pride in the culture in which he

was brought up—and that that very loyalty causes him heartbreak as he thinks of his people's rejection of Christ. But he looks at Gentiles—ex-pagans, Greeks that he was taught to look down on—and sees that many of them are turning to Christ. They have been grafted into Israel—they **are** Israel: and therefore the past of Israel is **their** past.

Israel and Africa

I have already indicated the importance of African **theology** for the future of the church. Among current African theologians—John Mbiti, Bolaji Idowu, Harry Sawyerr come to mind—no question is more clamant than the African Christian identity crisis. It is not simply an intellectual quest. This massive shift in the center of gravity of the Christian world which has taken place cannot be separated from the cultural impact of the West in imperial days. Now the Empires are dead, and the Western value-setting of the Christian faith largely rejected. Where does this leave the African Christian? Who is he? Where is his past? A past is vital for all of us—without it, like the amnesiac man, we cannot know who we are.

The prime African theological quest at present is thus: What is the past of the African Christian? What is the relationship between Africa's old religions and her new one? The writers mentioned are all scholars who are highly committed churchmen; they are also writers on traditional religion, who have sought to interpret it. Their conclusions have been called syncretistic by some Christian writers (cf. e.g. B. Kato, *Theological pitfalls in Africa* 1975); on the other hand, an African non-Christian writer like Okot p'Bitek may accuse them of rewriting the old religion in the "missionary" interest. The topic is too complex for discussion here. It is extraordinary that the safest verdict on many names for the Supreme Being all over Arica is that pronounced by Janzen and MacGaffey with regard to Kongo: "The parallel between the biblical "God" and the African **Nzambi** is sufficiently close that protracted scholarly debate has failed to discover how much the concept of **Nzambi** owes to missionary teaching, and the equivalence of the two terms has been universally accepted in Kongo for many years" (*Anthology of Kongo Religion,* 1974, 14). One reason for the search and debate is the heart cry of the African Christian to know whether the same God was with his ancestors as he calls on now, and whether both were the same as Abraham called on. It is, *mutatis mutandis,* the quest of Clement of Alexandria—and of Muhammad.

In the surviving literature of second century Christianity, it is not hard to see a similar agony of soul. By this time most Christians were no longer Jews. They were Gentiles, Greek-speaking people, with their own heritage of education and language. One can see the concerns of a man like Clement of Alexandria. He is a disciple of Christ; he is an evangelist who wants to bring people to the same discipleship. But how can he expect them to come if what is on offer is an alien cult? And what of their past? Did God have nothing to do with it all these years? Was everything in their heritage evil? Those who witnessed against evil and pointed to good before Christ—Was this nothing to do with God? I think none of us would be entirely happy about the outcome of his theologizing: but one can have every sympathy with his quest, and his firm apprehension that, as Paul put it, God was, and always had been, "the God of the heathen also."

But there were among his contemporaries other thinkers with the same quest, the people we now call Gnostics, whose concern was also to make the Christian faith acceptable to people brought up in the Greek world. The trouble was that their approach was based entirely on contemporary thinking, eliminating all the things unacceptable to educated—that is to Greek—men. For them the 'barbarian' element must be removed from the gospel; and the 'barbarian' element obviously included the Last Judgment and the Resurrection. But these things were part of a framework—the historical nature of the faith—which ultimately derived from the Old Testament.

Such thinkers played down, or ignored, or rejected, the Old Testament and the Christian adoptive past. Perhaps the most important point about the opponents of the Gnostics is that they were just as Greek as the Gnostics. They felt all sorts of intellectual difficulties which we do not feel. But they knew they must hold to the whole of the Scriptures, the adoptive part of their religion, and in doing so they turned the second important corner in Christian history. Perhaps the test between indigenization and syncretism is the capacity to incorporate the history of Israel and God's people and treat it as one's own.

For the Scriptures belong to the whole church: the trouble is that none of us can read the Scriptures without cultural blinkers of some sort. Reading the Scriptures together gives a better chance of seeing things otherwise left hidden. In a cross-cultural situation it is likely that each will see things in Scripture that others will miss. The great theological fact of our time, which I believe makes this potentially the most exciting era in the history of Christian theology, is that the church now looks more like the great multitude out of all nations and kindreds than at any former point in its history: and thus has greater possibilities than at any previous time for mutual enrichment and self-criticism, as God causes yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word.

MISSION-FOCUS INDEX

Volume 1

1. The Gospel and Mission Strategy, Howard H. Charles
2. The Dynamics of Mission, Wilbert R. Shenk
3. The Shape of Mission Strategy, David A. Shank
4. Motivating for Mission, J. D. Graber
5. Rediscovering the Apostolic Ministry, Virgil Vogt

Volume 2

1. The Structure of a Missionary Church, Wilbert R. Shenk
2. A Shape for the Congregation of the Future, Paul M. Miller
3. Choosing Leaders in the Congregation, Paul M. Miller
4. Mennonites and Evangelism, Glenn Brubacher
5. Training for Ministry and Mission, James D. Kratz

Volume 3

1. The Multiplication of Agencies and the Meaning of Mission, Wilbert R. Shenk
2. Toward Creative Strategy in Church Extension, Simon G. Gingerich
   The Mennonite Diaspora in Our Mission Strategy, Virgil J. Brenneman
3. To Proclaim or to Serve? J. D. Graber
4. Choosing the Development Catalyst, Edgar Stoesz
5. New Religious Movements, Gottfried Oosterwal

Volume 4

1. Biblical Perspectives for Mission, Willard M. Swartley
2. Planning for Growth, Richard Showalter
3. Notes on the Theological Meaning of China, J. Lawrence Burkholder
4. The Anabaptist Vision and Our World Mission, I. Robert L. Ramseyer, II. Takashi Yamada
5. The Institutionalization of the Church, John W. Eby
   Institutionalization: Some Questions, Boyd Nelson

Volume 5

1. Where Are We in Mission: Which Paradigm? Wilbert R. Shenk
   Gospel and Culture in Evangelism, Robert L. Ramseyer
2. Towards an Understanding of Christian Conversion, David A. Shank
   Where . . . in Home Missions, Paul N. Kraybill
3. Church Growth among Spanish-Speaking North Americans, Jose M. Ortiz
   Christian Love: Its Four Dimensions as a Resolution of the Ancient Conflict between Faith and Works, Donovan E. Smucker
4. Authentic Witness—A Call for Reappraisal, C. Norman Kraus
   The Mission to Native Americans, R. Pierce Beaver
5. Where Are We in Overseas Missions, Donald R. Jacobs
   Authoritarian Governments and Mission, Wilbert R. Shenk
   Supplement - Crucial Issues in Theological Education:
   In Latin America, Hugo Zorrilla
   A Chinese Perspective, Jonathan T'ien-en Chao

Volume 6

1. The Gospel of Peace, Marlin E. Miller
   Irish Theology, Michael Garde
   A Time of Loss and a Time of Repentance, book review by David A. Shank
2. Vietnam: I Wouldn't Do It Again, James E. Metzler
   Walking with Vietnamese Christians, James Klassen
   Implication of the Vietnam Experience for World Mission, Luke S. Martin
3. The Missionary as a Marginal Person, Roger C. Sider
   Paul and Mission, John Driver
4. A New Thrust in Urban Missions, Lupe De Leon, Jr.
   The Plight of the Burned Out Pastor, Dwight J. McFadden, Jr.
   Gospel at Home, Theron F. Schlabach
   Missionary Congregations, an editorial comment
   No More Crusades, Charles R. Taber
5. The Missionary Stance of the Church in 1 Peter, George R. Brunk, III
   Jesus at Nazareth: Jubilee and the Missionary Message (Luke 4:15-30), Don Blosser
   A Theology of Mission in Outline, Mennonite Board of Missions
   Letter to the Editor, David A. Shank
6. Biblical Foundations for Interdependence, John E. Toews
   Structures and Strategies for Interdependence in World Missions, Charles R. Taber
   Reverencing God's Image, Paul M. Miller
   A Tantalizing Idea, an editorial comment

7. Towards a Theology of Communication, Arthur G. McPhee
Effective Evangelism: An Opportunity in Communication?, J. Allen Brubaker
Can Western Women Adapt to Japanese Culture?, Sue Richard
Africa and Christian Identity, A. F. Walls

Beaver, R. Pierce, The Mission to Native Americans 5:4
Blosser, Don, Jesus at Nazareth: Jubilee and the Missionary Message 6:5
Brenneman, Virgil J., The Mennonite Diaspora in Our Mission Strategy 4:2
Brubacher, Glenn, Mennonites and Evangelism 2:4
Brubaker, J. Allen, Effective Evangelism: An Opportunity in Communication 6:7
Brunk, George R., III, The Missionary Stance of the Church in 1 Peter 6:5
Burkholder, J. Lawrence, Notes on the Theological Meaning of China 4:3
Chao, Jonathan T'ien-en, Crucial Issues in Leadership Training 5:5
Charles, Howard H., The Gospel and Missionary Strategy 1:1
De Leon, Lupe, Jr., A New Thrust in Urban Missions 6:4
Driver, John, Paul and Mission 6:3
Eby, John W., The Institutionalization of the Church 4:5
Garde, Michael, Irish Theology 6:1
Gingerich, Simon G., Toward Creative Strategy in Church Extension 3:2
Graber, J. D., Motivating for Mission 1:4
To Proclaim or to Serve? 3:3
Jacobs, Donald R., Where Are We in Overseas Missions 5:5
Klassen, James, Walking with Vietnamese Christians 6:2
Kratz, James D., Training for Ministry and Mission 2:5
Kraus, C. Norman, Authentic Witness—A Call for Reappraisal 5:4
Kraybill, Paul N., Where Are We in Home Missions 5:2
McPhee, Arthur, G., Towards a Theology of Communication 6:7
McFadden, Dwight J., Jr., The Plight of the Burned Out Pastor 6:4
Martin, Luke S., Implication of the Vietnam Experience for World Mission 6:2
Mennonite Board of Missions, A Theology of Mission in Outline 6:5
Metzler, James E., Vietnam: I Wouldn't Do It Again 6:2
Miller, Marlin E., The Gospel of Peace 6:1
Miller, Paul M., Choosing Leaders in the Congregation 2:3
Reverencing God's Image 6:6
A Shape for the Congregation of the Future 2:2
Nelson, Boyd, Institutionalization: Some Questions 4:5
Oosterwal, Gottfried, New Religious Movements: A Challenge to Mission 3:5
Ortiz, Jose M., Church Growth among Spanish-Speaking North Americans 5:3
Ramseyer, Robert L., The Anabaptist Vision and Our World Mission 4:4
Gospel and Culture in Evangelism 5:1
Richard, Sue, Can Western Women Adapt to Japanese Culture? 6:7
Schlabach, Theron F., Gospel at Home 6:4
Shank, David A., A Letter to the Editor 6:5
The Shape of Mission Strategy 1:3
A Time of Loss and a Time of Repentance, book review 6:1
Towards an Understanding of Christian Conversion 5:2
Shenk, Wilbert R., Authoritarian Governments and Mission 5:5
The Dynamics of Mission 1:2
The Multiplication of Agencies and the Meaning of Mission 3:1
The Structure of a Missionary Church 2:1
Where Are We in Mission: Which Paradigm? 5:1
Showalter, Richard, Planning for Growth 4:2
Sider, Roger C., The Missionary as a Marginal Person 6:3
Smucker, Donovan E., Christian Love: Its Four Dimensions as a Resolution of the Ancient Conflict between Faith and Works 5:3
Stoesz, Edgar, Choosing the Development Catalyst 3:4
Swartley, Willard M., Biblical Perspectives for Mission 4:1
Taber, Charles R., No More Crusades 6:4
Structures and Strategies for Interdependence in World Mission 6:6
Toews, John E., Biblical Foundations for Interdependence 6:6
Vogt, Virgil, Rediscovering the Apostolic Ministry 1:5
Walls, A. F., Africa and Christian Identity 6:7
Yamada, Takashi, The Anabaptist Vision and Our World Mission 4:4
Zorrilla, Hugo, Crucial Issues in Theological Education in Latin America 5:5

Africa and Christian Identity, A. F. Walls	6:7
Anabaptist Vision and Our World Mission, The, R. Ramseyer and T. Yamada	4:4
Authentic Witness—A Call for Reappraisal, C. N. Kraus	5:4
Authoritarian Governments and Mission, W. R. Shenk	5:5
Biblical Foundation for Interdependence, J. E. Toews	6:6
Biblical Perspectives for Mission, W. M. Swartley	4:1
Can Western Women Adapt to Japanese Culture?, S. Richard	6:7
Choosing Leaders in the Congregation, P. M. Miller	2:3
Choosing the Development Catalyst, E. Stoesz	3:4
Christian Love: Its Four Dimensions as a Resolution of the Ancient Conflict between Faith and Works, D. E. Smucker	5:3
Church Growth among Spanish-Speaking North Americans, J. M. Ortiz	5:3
Crucial Issues in Leadership Training, J. Chao	5:5
Crucial Issues in Theological Education: A Chinese Perspective, J. T'ien-en Chao	5:5
Crucial Issues in Theological Education in Latin America, H. Zorrilla	5:5
Dynamics of Mission, The, W. R. Shenk	1:2
Effective Evangelism: An Opportunity in Communication?, J. A. Brubaker	6:7
Gospel and Culture in Evangelism, R. L. Ramseyer	5:1
Gospel and Missionary Strategy, The, H. H. Charles	1:1
Gospel at Home, T. F. Schlabach	6:4
Gospel of Peace, The, M. E. Miller	6:1
Implications of the Vietnam Experience for World Mission, L. S. Martin	6:2
Institutionalization of the Church, The, J. W. Eby	4:5
Institutionalization: Some Questions, B. H. Nelson	4:5
Irish Theology, M. Garde	6:1
Jesus at Nazareth: Jubilee and the Missionary Message, D. Blosser	6:5
Letter to the Editor, D. A. Shank	6:5
Mennonites and Evangelism, G. Brubacher	2:4
Mennonite Diaspora in Our Mission Strategy, The, V. J. Brenneman	3:3
Mission to Native Americans, The, R. P. Beaver	5:4
Missionary as a Marginal Person, The, R. C. Sider	6:3
Missionary Congregations - an editorial comment	6:4
Missionary Stance of the Church in 1 Peter, The, G. R. Brunk, III	6:5
Motivating for Mission, J. D. Graber	1:4
Multiplication of Agencies and the Meaning of Mission, The, W. R. Shenk	3:1
New Religious Movements: A Challenge to Mission, G. Oosterwal	3:5
New Thrust in Urban Missions, A , L. De Leon, Jr.	6:4
No More Crusades, C. R. Taber	6:4
Notes on the Theological Meaning of China, J. L. Burkholder	4:3
Paul and Mission, J. Driver	6:3
Planning for Growth, R. Showalter	4:2
Plight of the Burned Out Pastor, The, D. J. McFadden, Jr.	6:4
Rediscovering the Apostolic Ministry, V. Vogt	1:5
Reverencing God's Image, P. M. Miller	6:6
Shape for the Congregation of the Future, A , P. M. Miller	2:2
Shape of Mission Strategy, The, D. A. Shank	1:3
Structure of a Missionary Church, The, W. R. Shenk	2:1
Structures and Strategies for Interdependence in World Mission, C. R. Taber	6:6
Tantalizing Idea, A , an editorial comment	6:6
Theology of Mission in Outline, A, Mennonite Board of Missions	6:5
Time of Loss and a Time of Repentance, A, book review, D. A. Shank	6:1
To Proclaim or to Serve? J. D. Graber	3:3
Towards a Theology of Communication, A. G. McPhee	6:7
Toward Creative Strategy in Church Extension, S. G. Gingerich	3:2
Towards an Understanding of Christian Conversion, D. A. Shank	5:2
Training for Ministry and Mission, J. D. Kratz	2:5
Vietnam: I Wouldn't Do It Again, J. E. Metzler	6:2
Walking with Vietnamese Christians, J. Klassen	6:2
Where Are We in Home Missions, P. N. Kraybill	5:2
Where Are We in Mission, W. R. Shenk	5:1
Where Are We in Overseas Missions, D. R. Jacobs	5:5

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